W. Jay Sydeman

Journey Down the American River

for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Viola and Cello

(1997)

Arts Aeternum

In the 1980's I was teaching at the Steiner College outside of Sacramento… wrote a piece for the Sacramento Symphony, 52 choral works based on Steiner's weekly meditations, and this "journey" for a local chamber group. It is descriptive of the American River as I saw it… a bucolic first movement and turbulent second for flute, clarinet and three strings.

I believe it is as much fun to play as to hear with themes introduced and developed as the piece unfolds. Stylistically it is a sort of tonality extended, but clearly there. It is not particularly demanding technically but creating the proper ensemble would take some working out which could be enjoyable for the performers.

– W. Jay Sydeman, September 2017

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the *New York Times*, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is a member of Nevada County Composers Cooperative, a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino.

Duration: I. Andante – circa 7:15
II. Allegro – circa 6:45

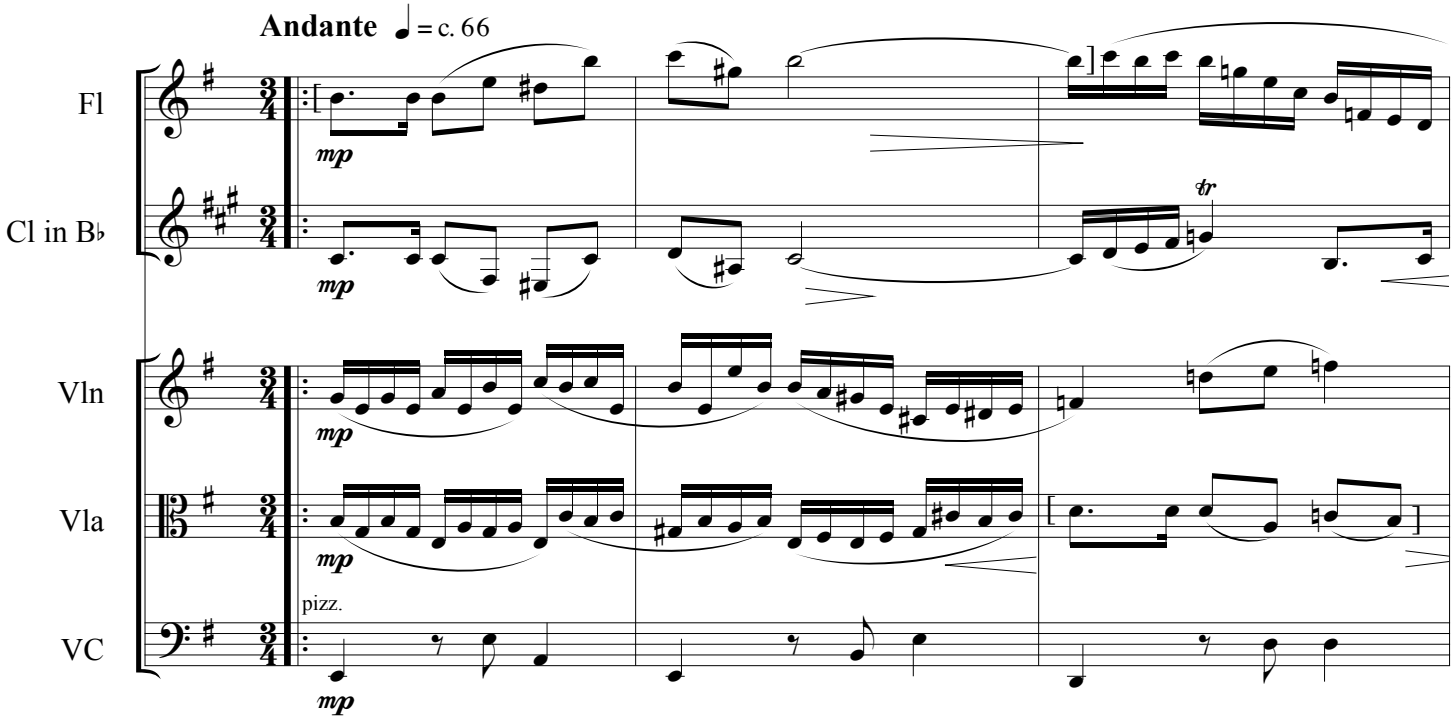
Edited by W. Jay Sydeman and Rick Shinozaki. For more information: rickshinozaki@gmail.com

Journey Down the American River

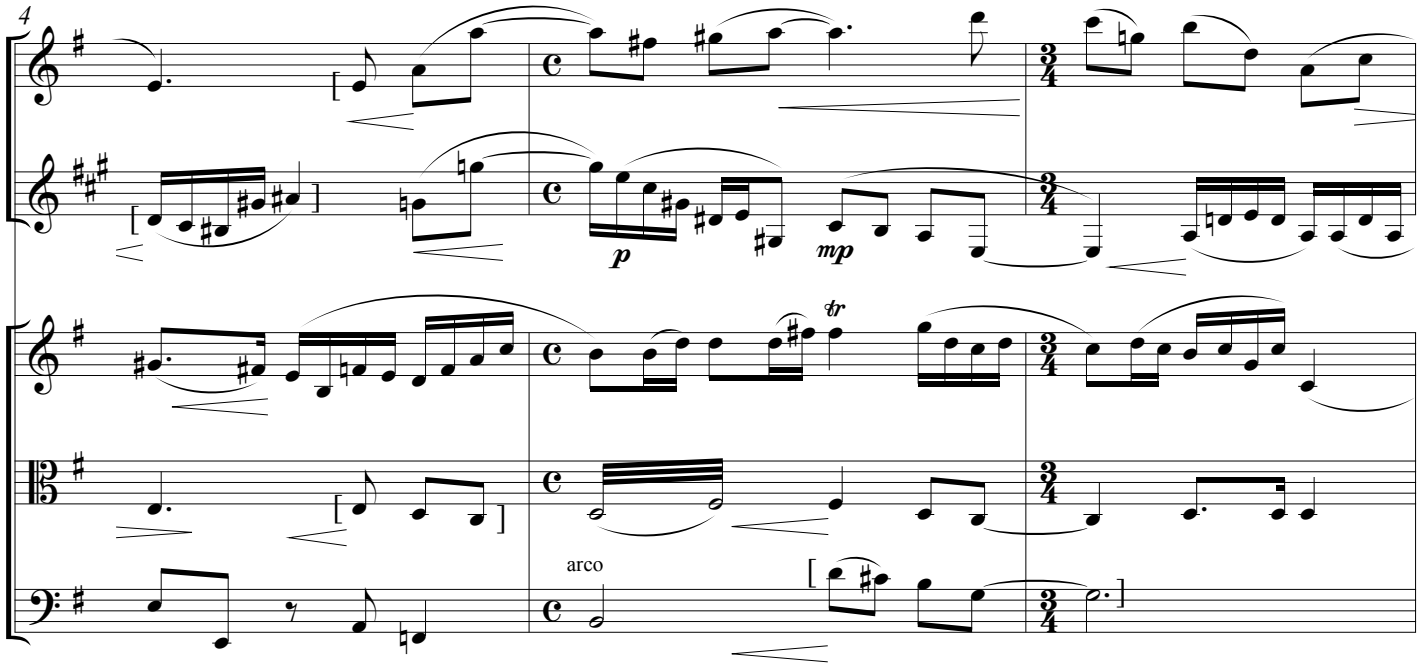
for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Viola and Cello

W. Jay Sydeman
(1997)

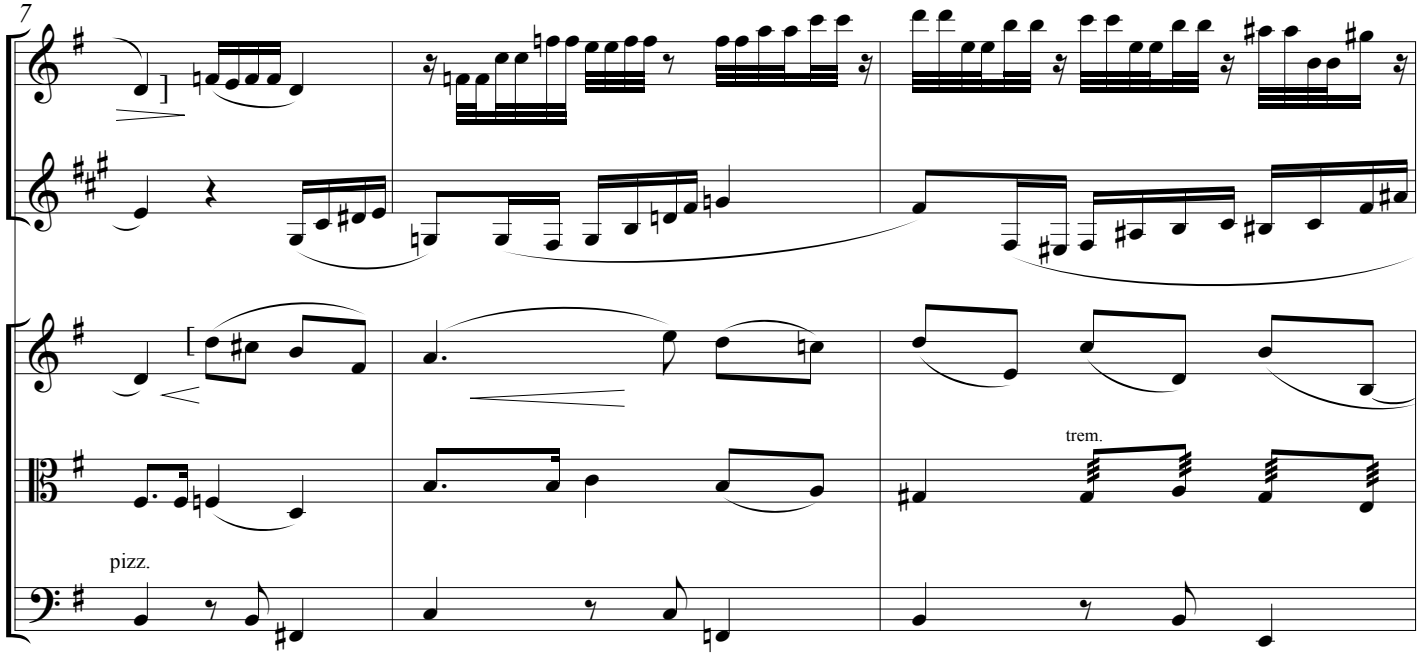
I.

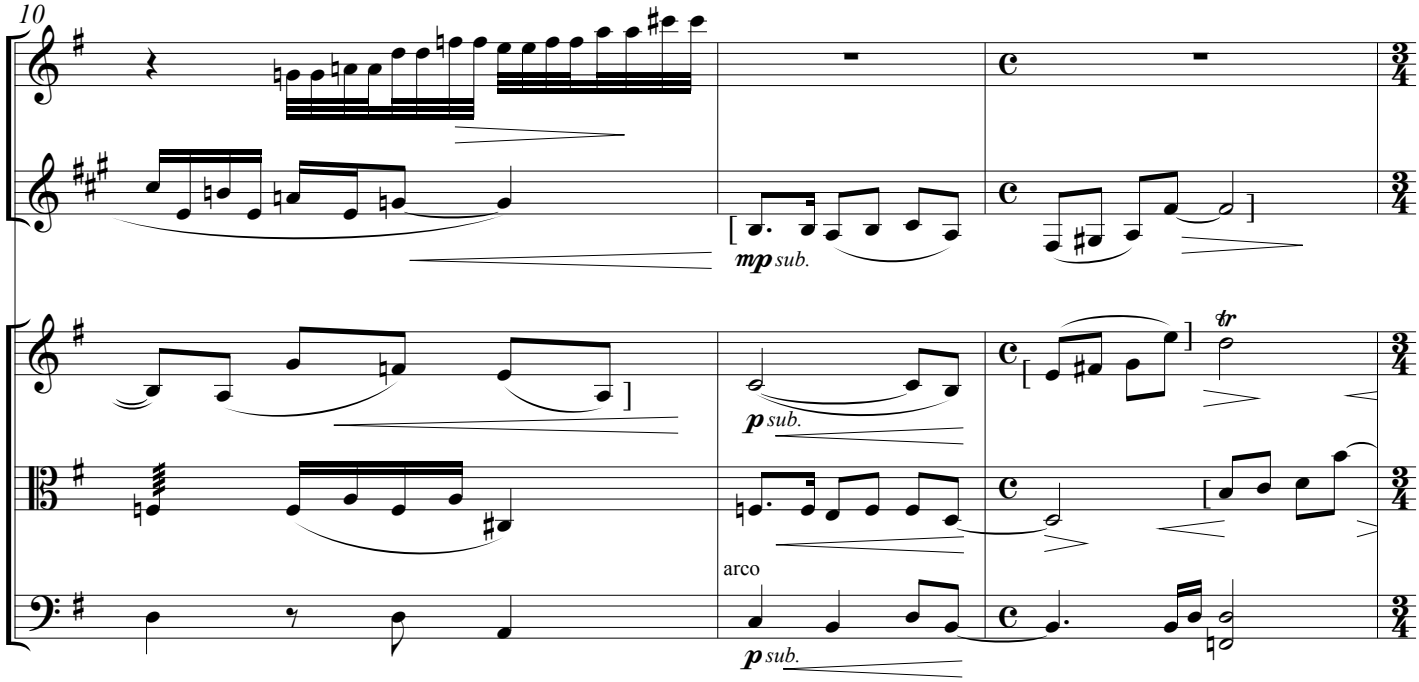


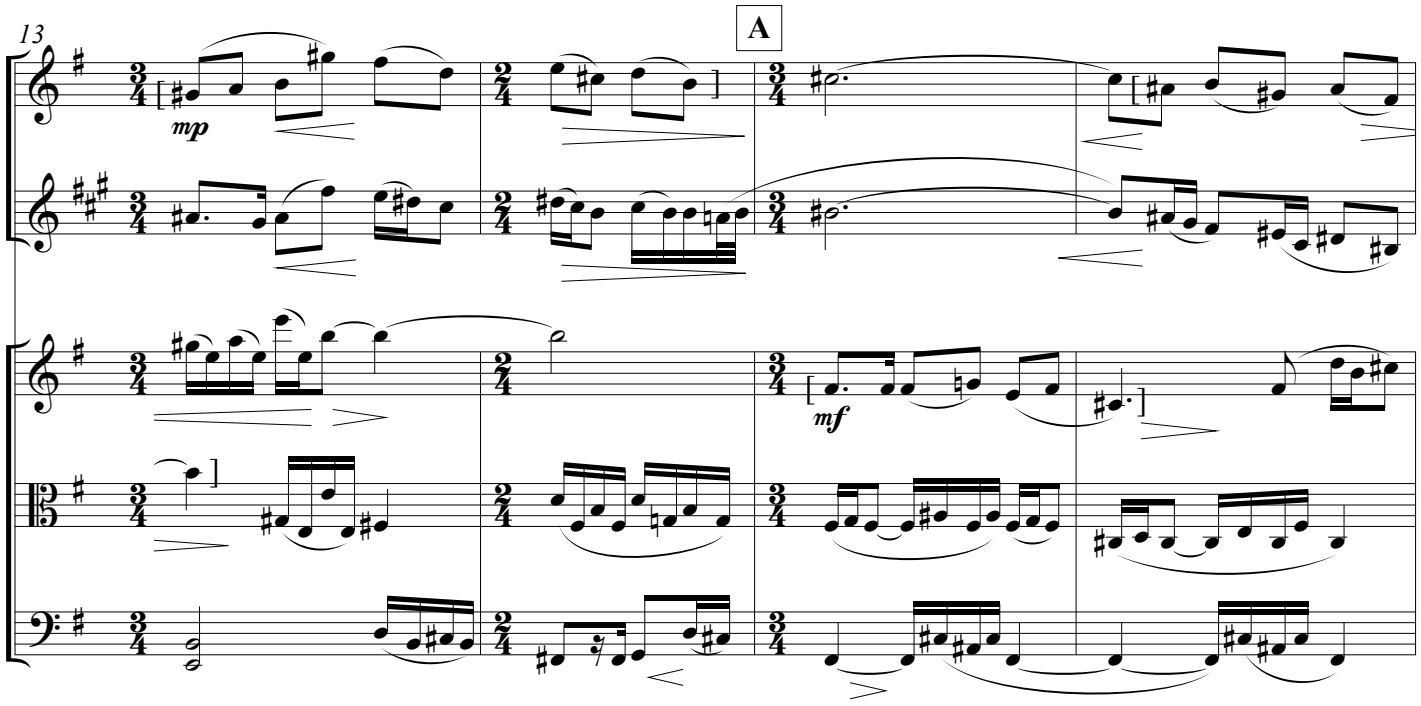
Note: Brackets denote primary voice

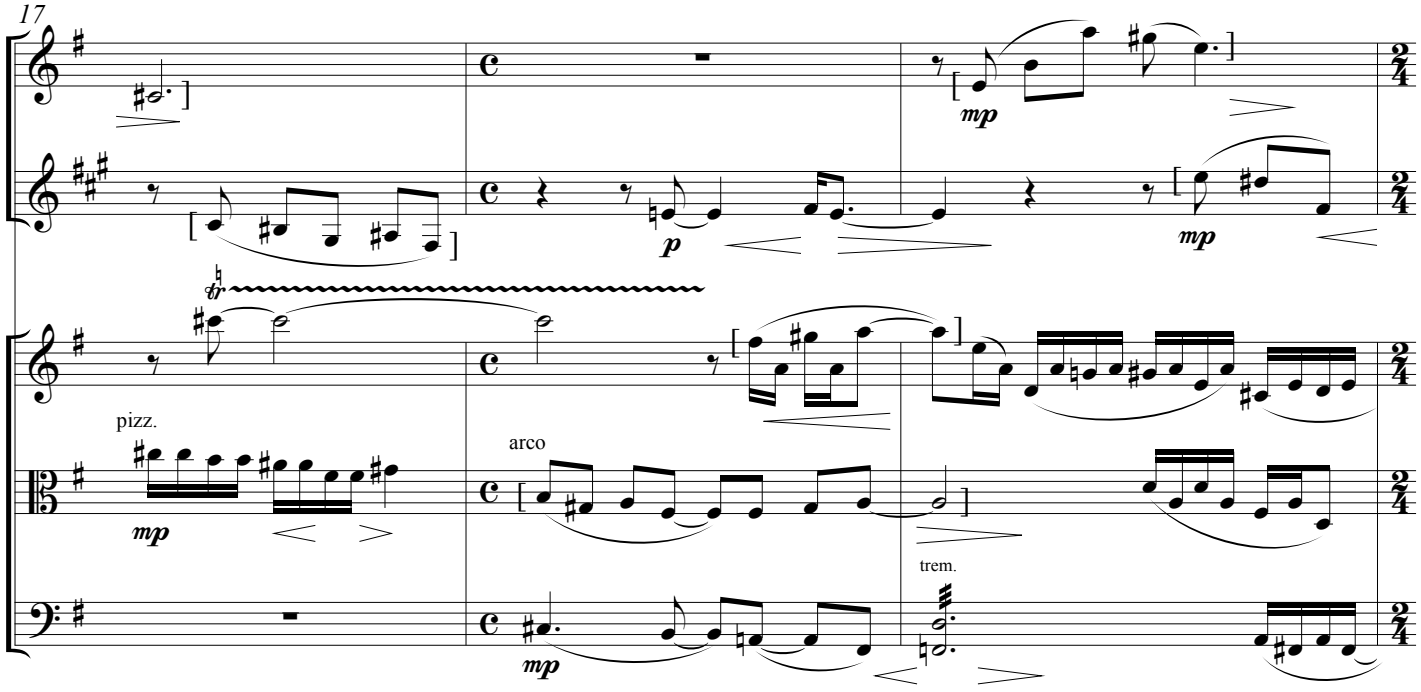


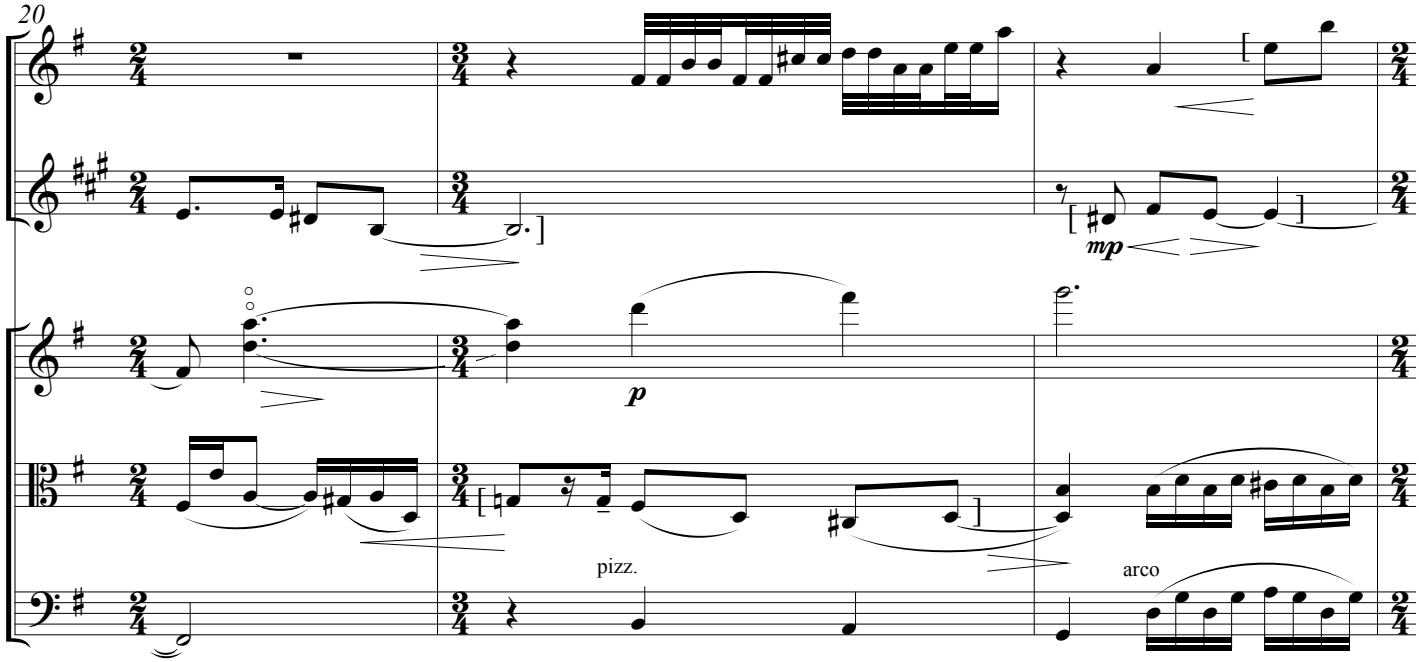
© 2020 Arts Aeturnum Productions. All rights reserved. v. 2020-12-06

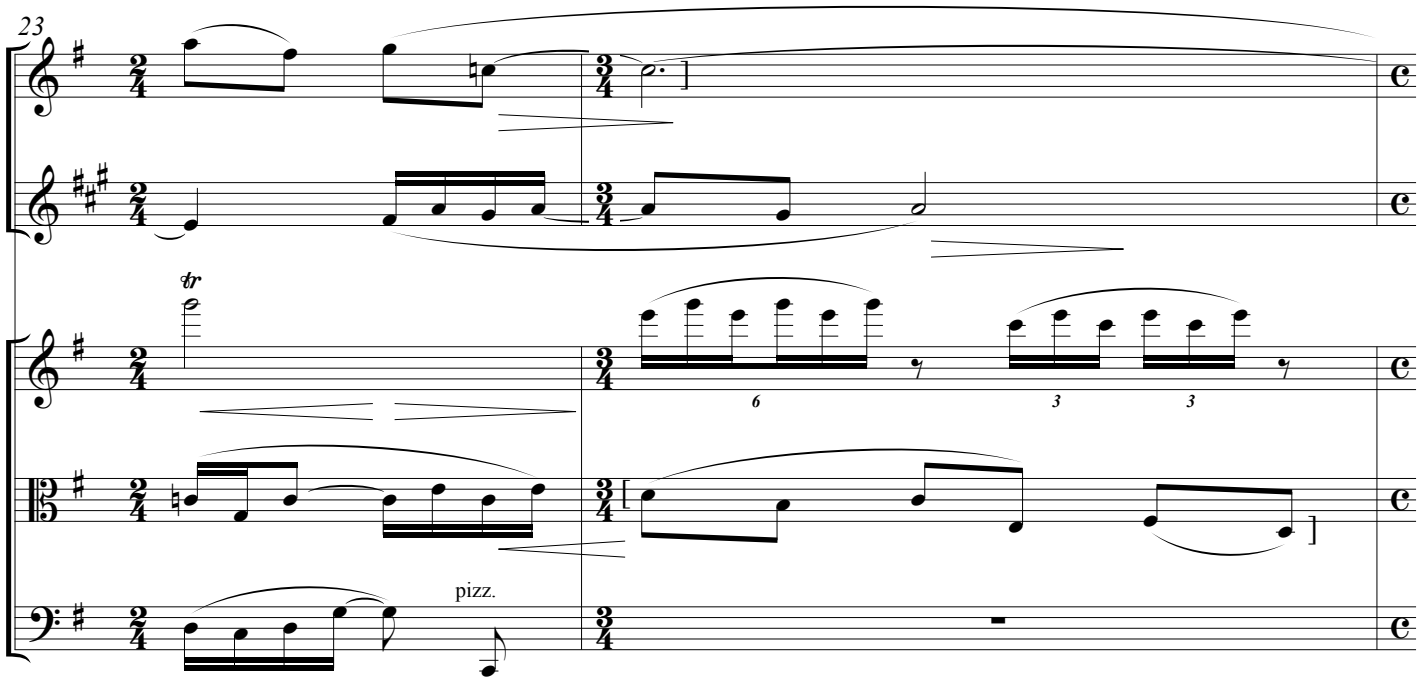

7
trem.
pizz.

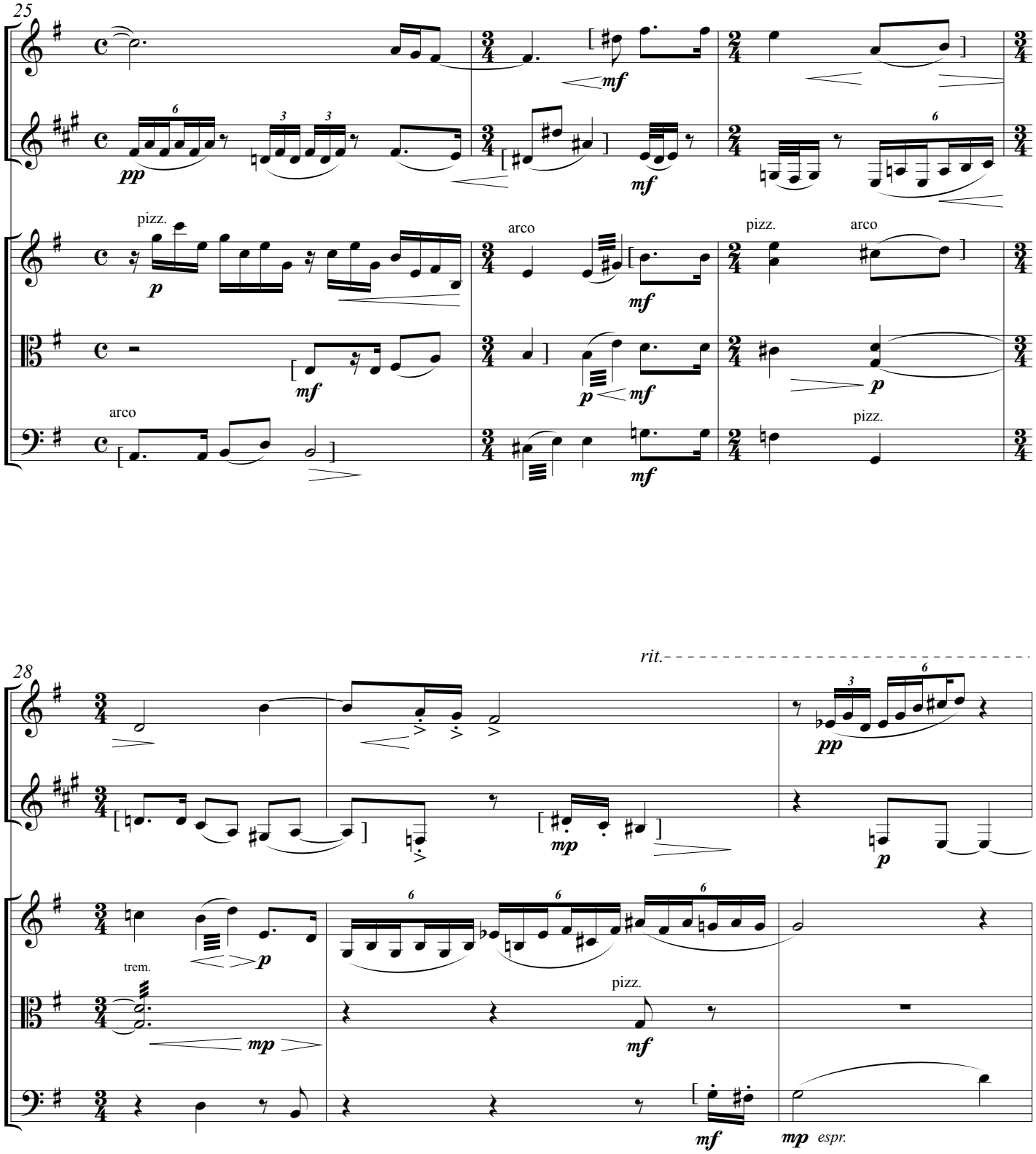

10
mp sub.
p sub.
tr
arco
p sub.

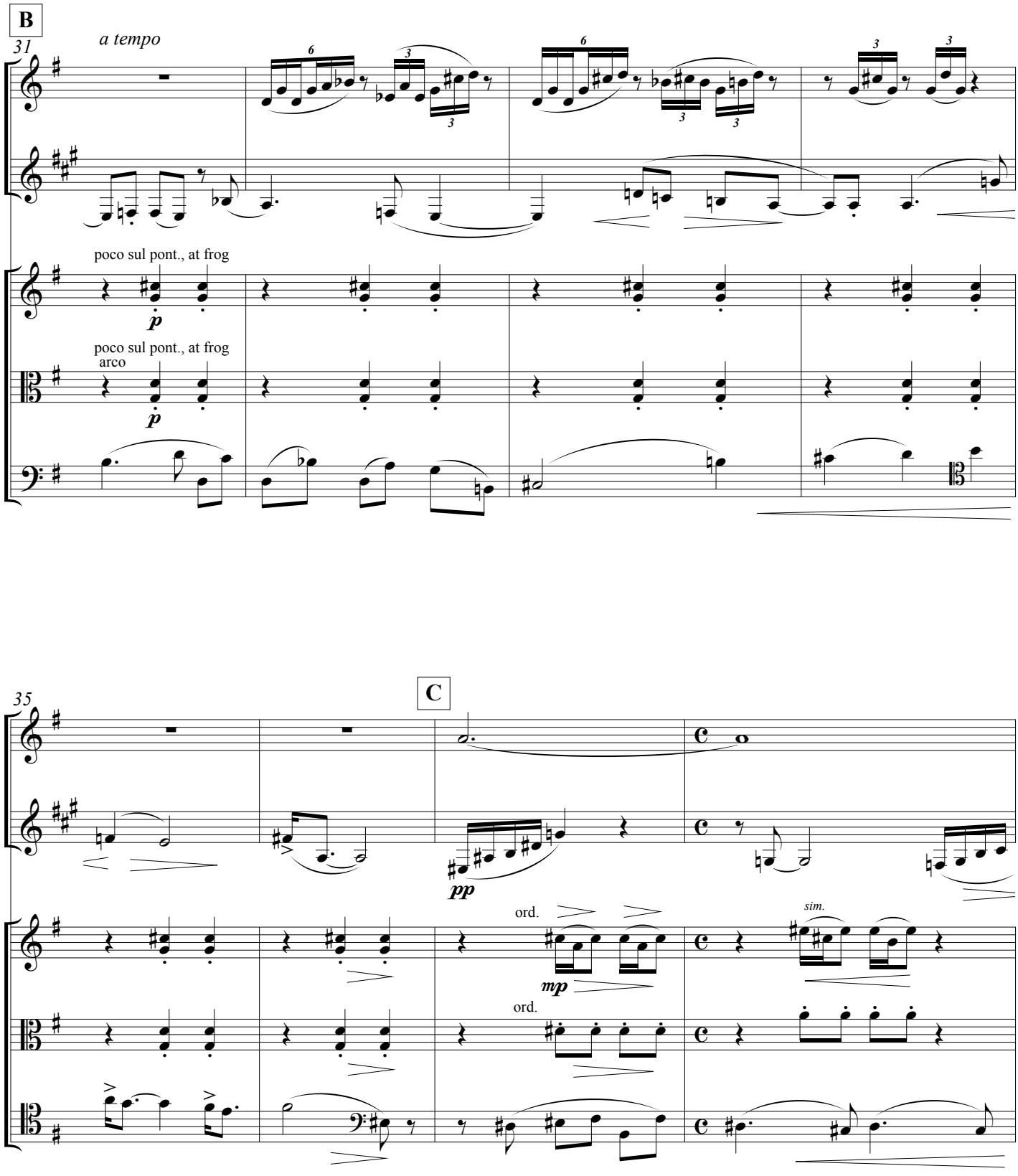

13
A
mp
mf

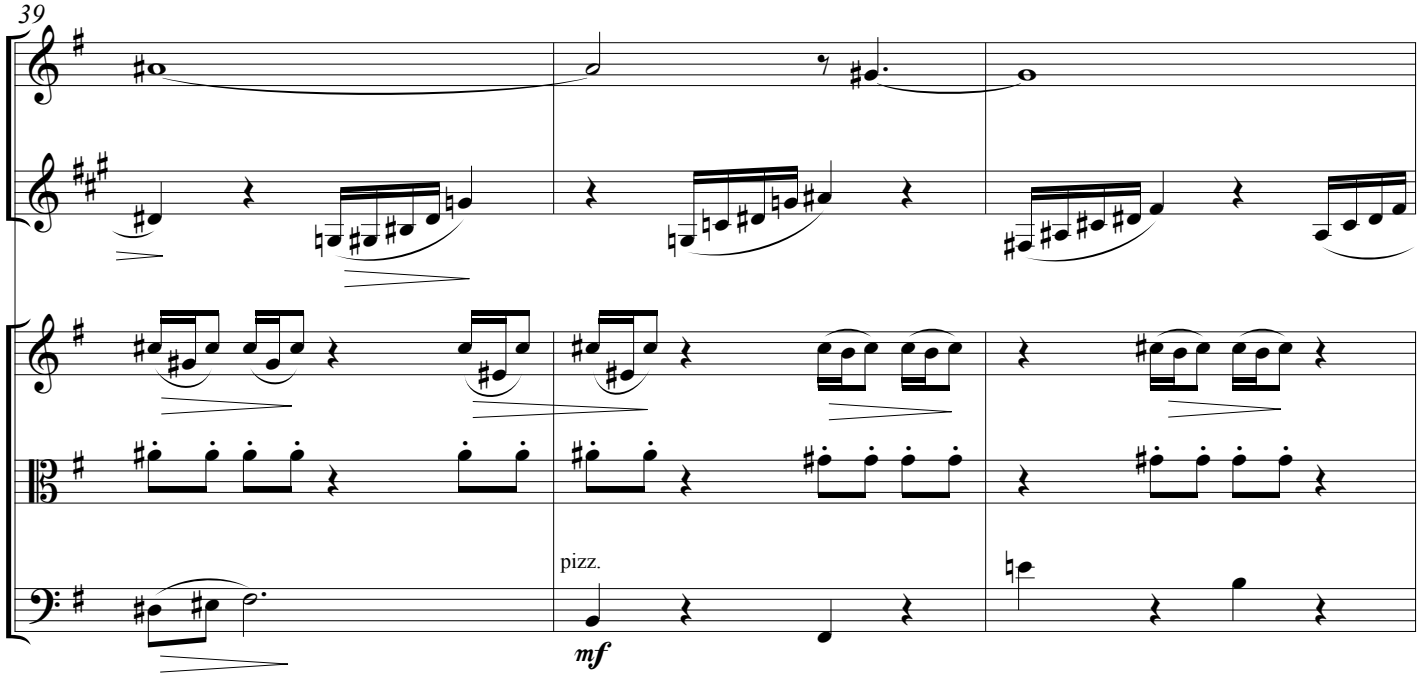

17
mp
p
mp
pizz.
mp
arco
trem.
mp

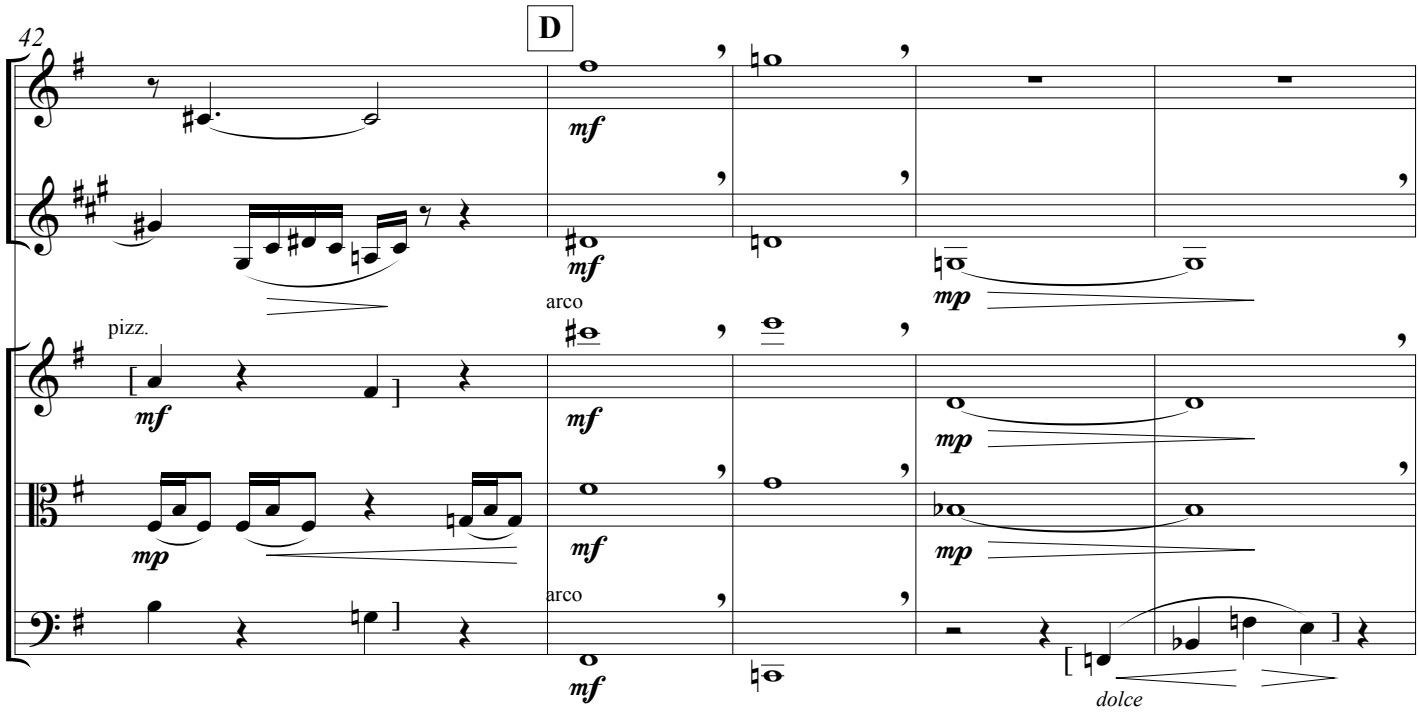

20
mp
p
pizz.
arco

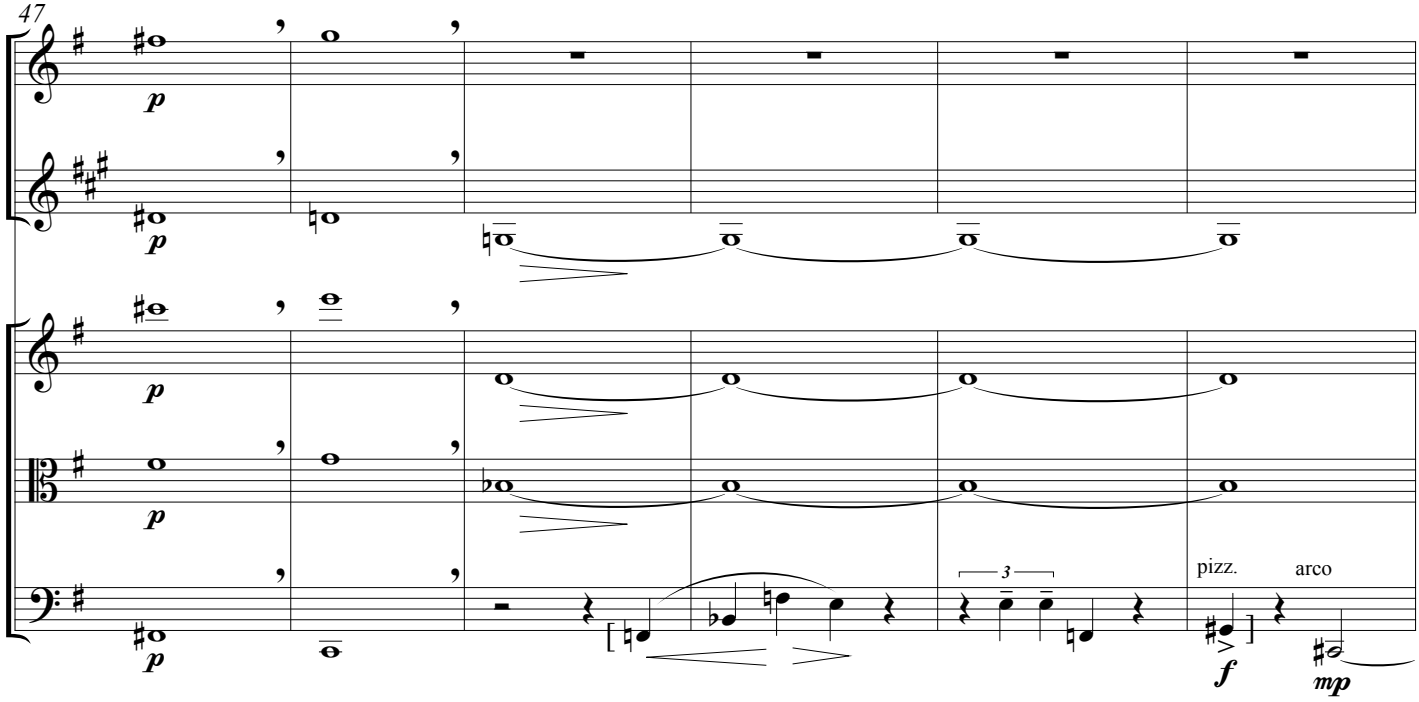

23
tr
6
3
3
pizz.

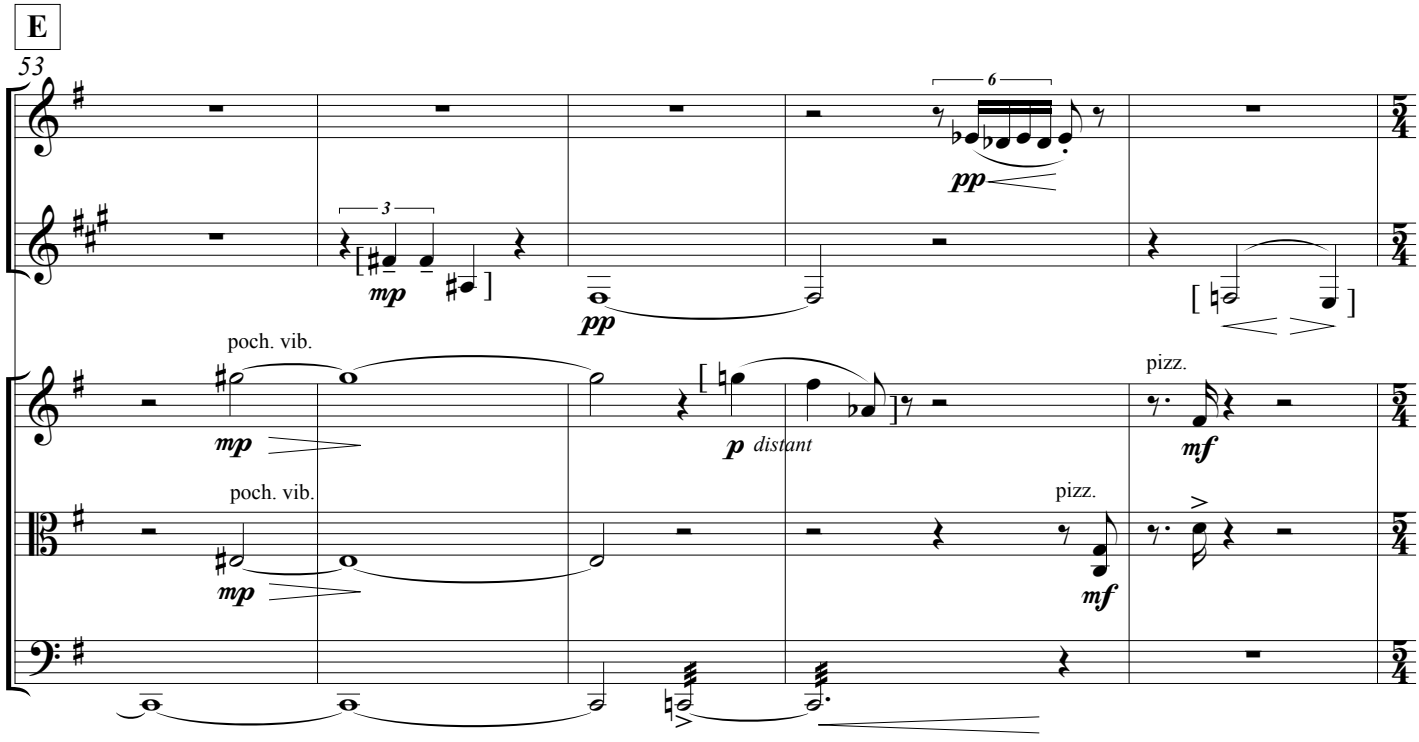

25
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
arco
pizz.
28
rit.
trem.
pizz.
espr.

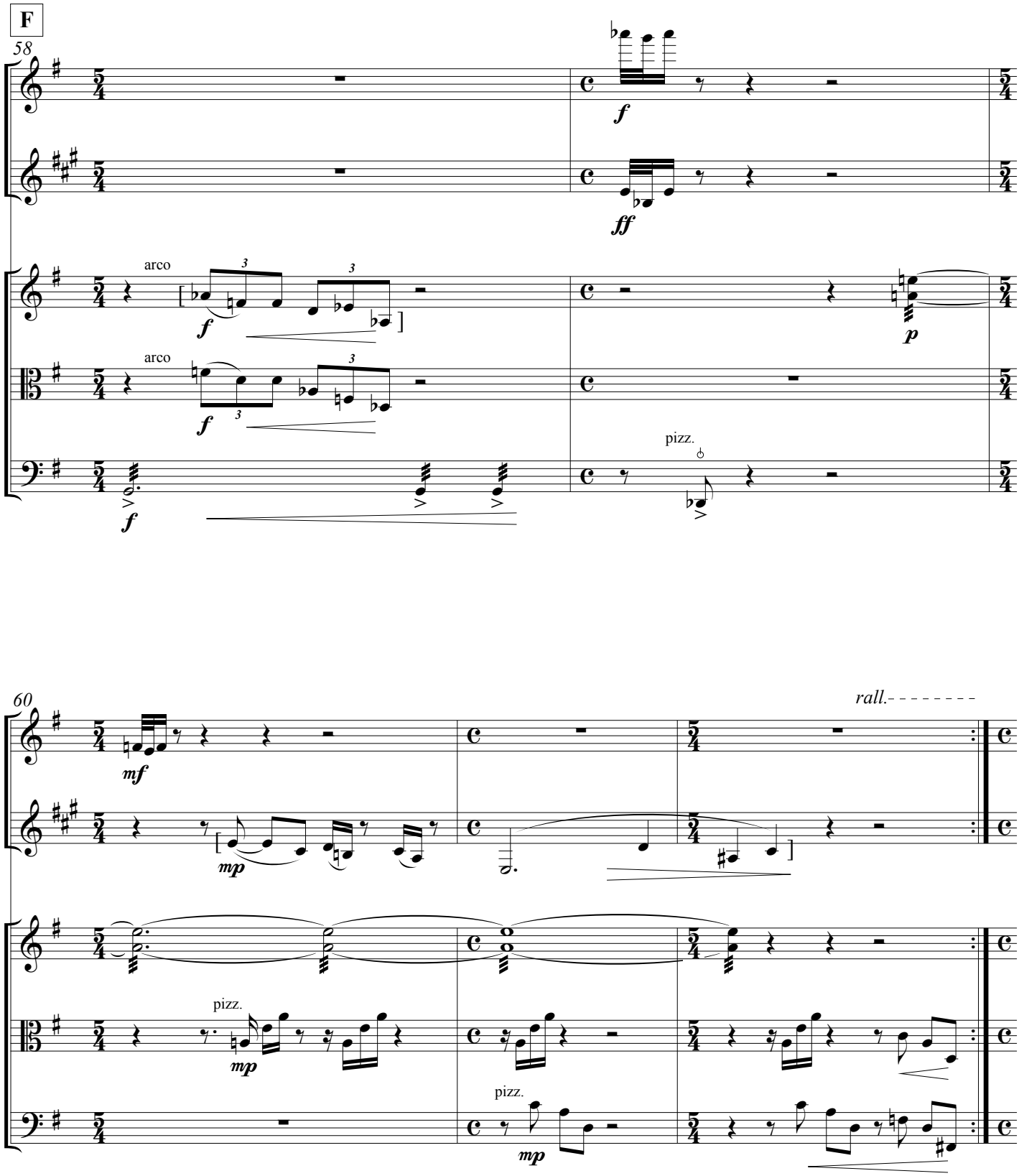

B
31
a tempo
poco sul pont., at frog
p
poco sul pont., at frog
arco
p
C
35
pp
ord.
mp
sim.
ord.

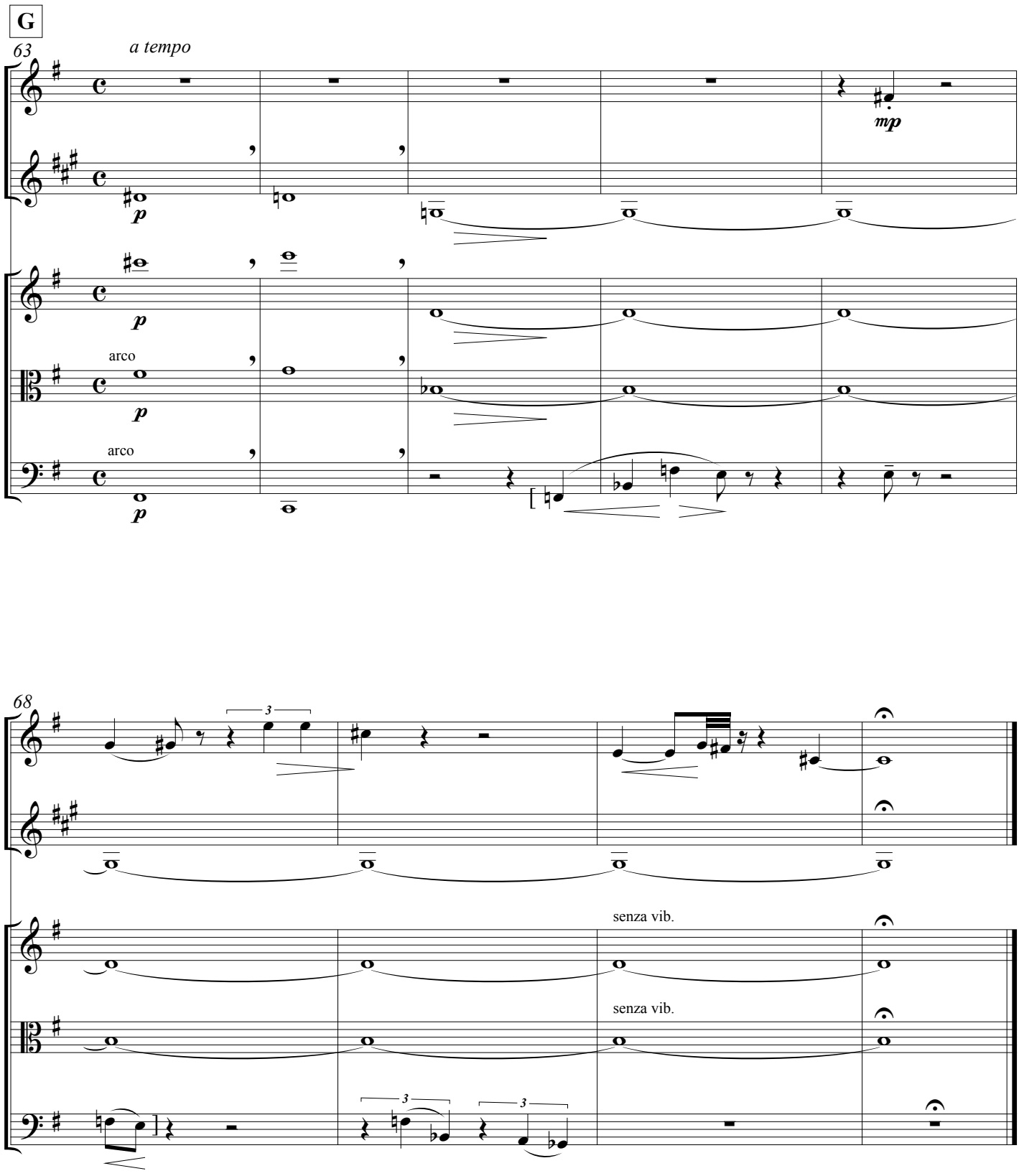

39
pizz.
mf


42
D
mf
mf
mp
arco
pizz.
mf
mf
mp
mp
mf
arco
mf
dolce

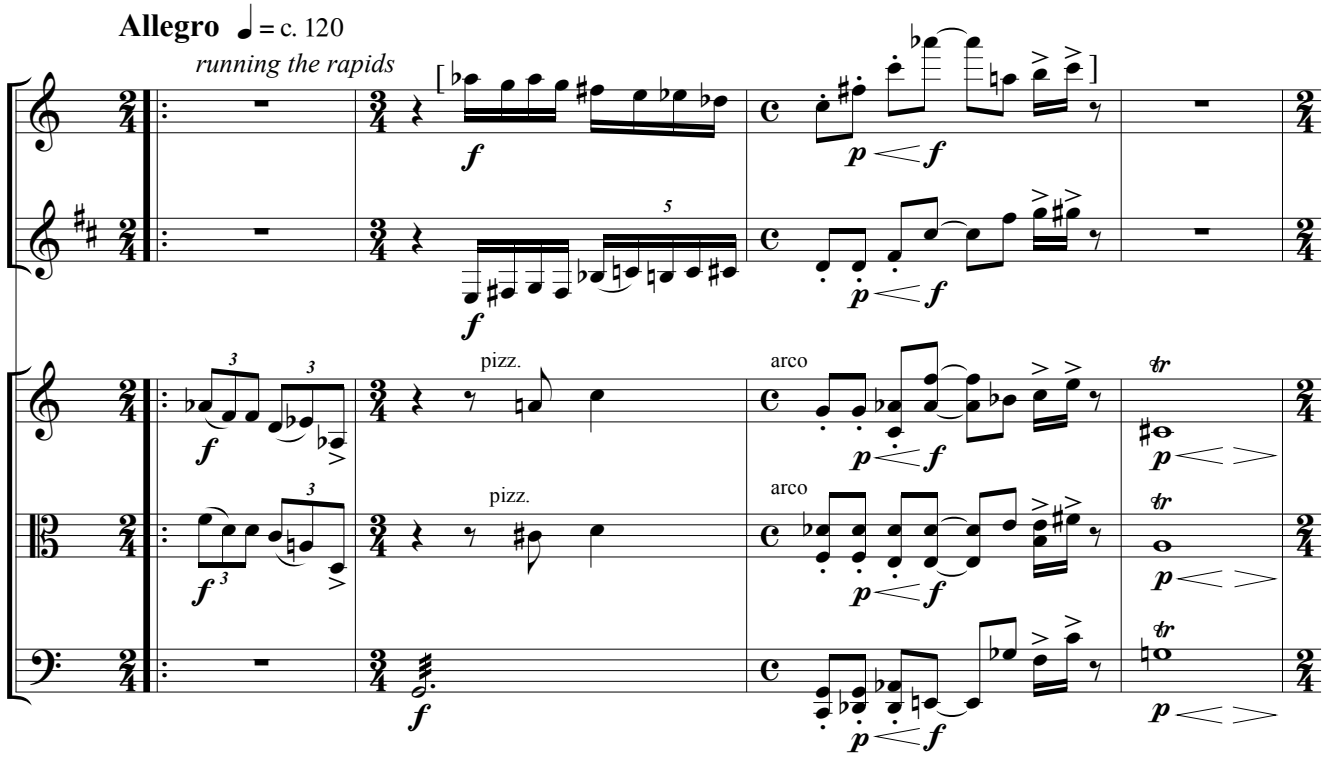

47
p
p
p
p
3
pizz.
arco
f
mp

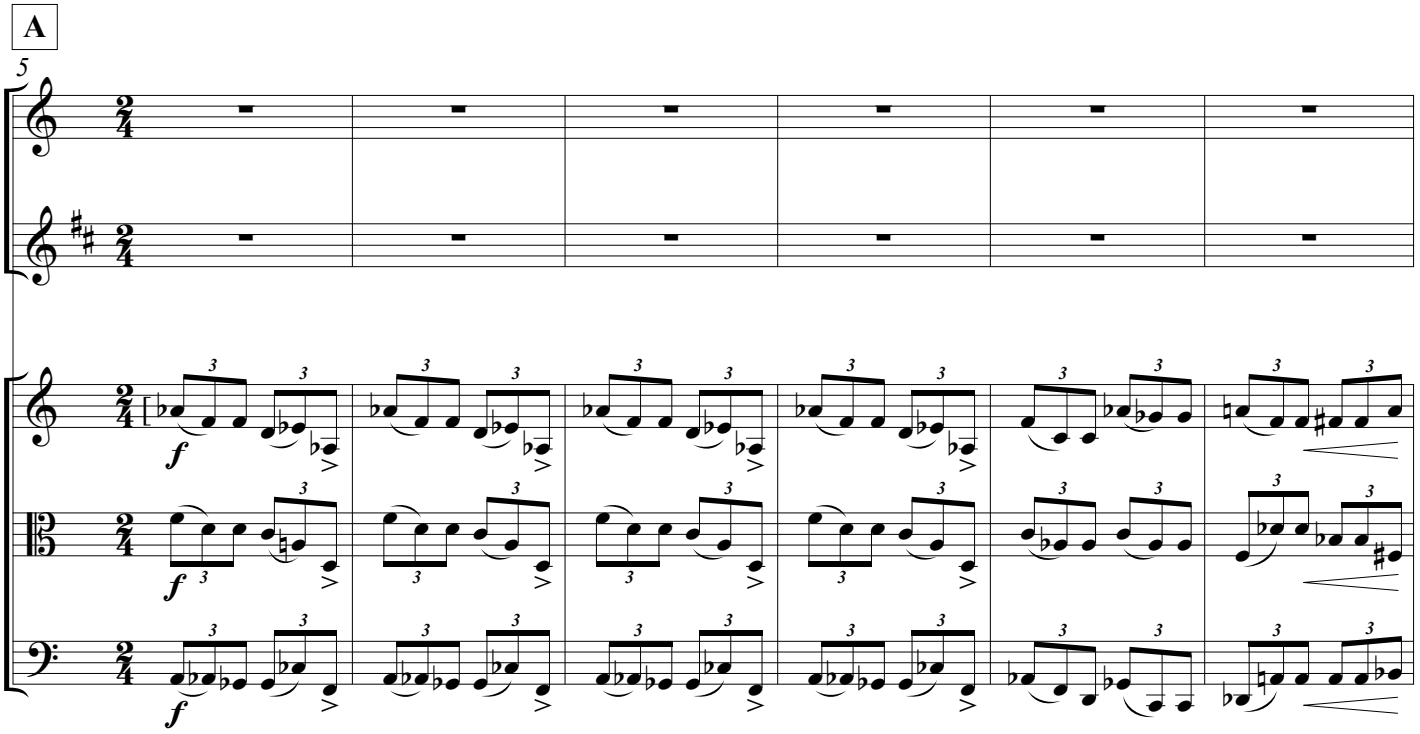

E
53
6
pp
3
mp
pp
poch. vib.
mp
p distant
pizz.
mf
poch. vib.
mp
pizz.
mf
5/4

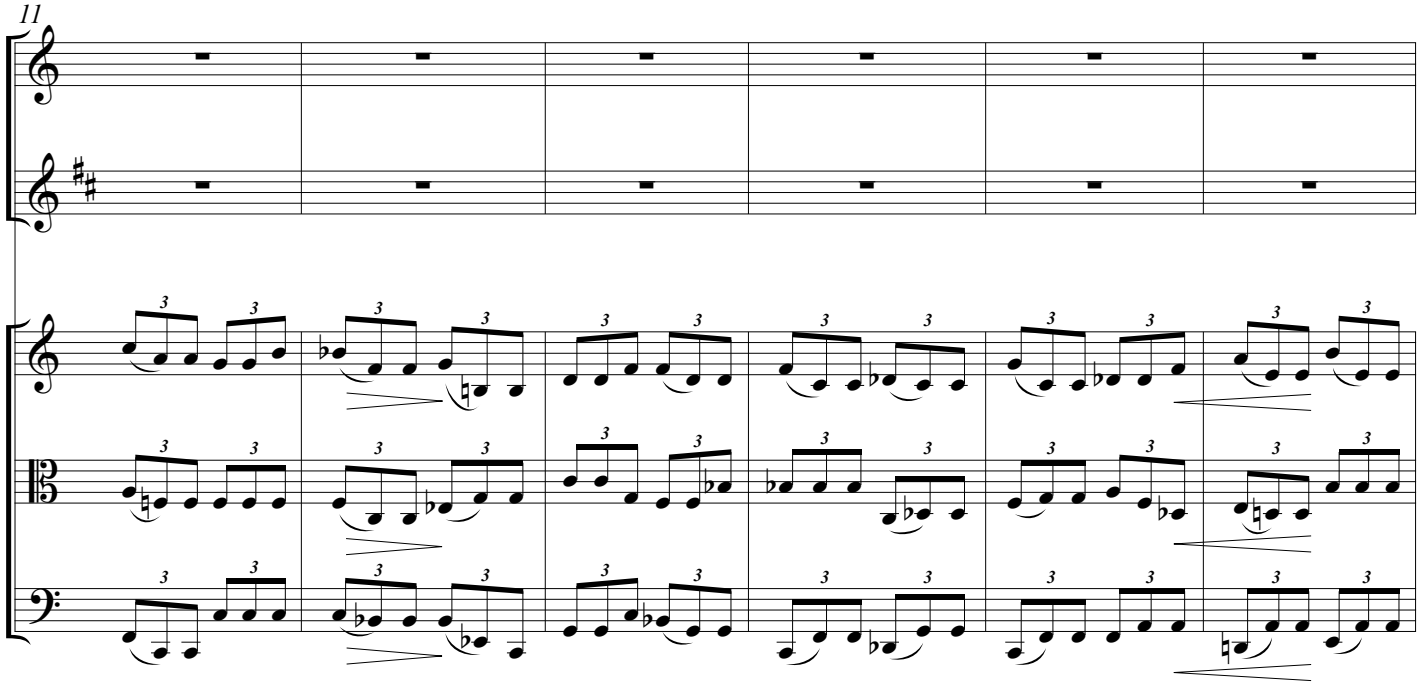

F
58
arco
arco
pizz.
60
rall.
pizz.
pizz.

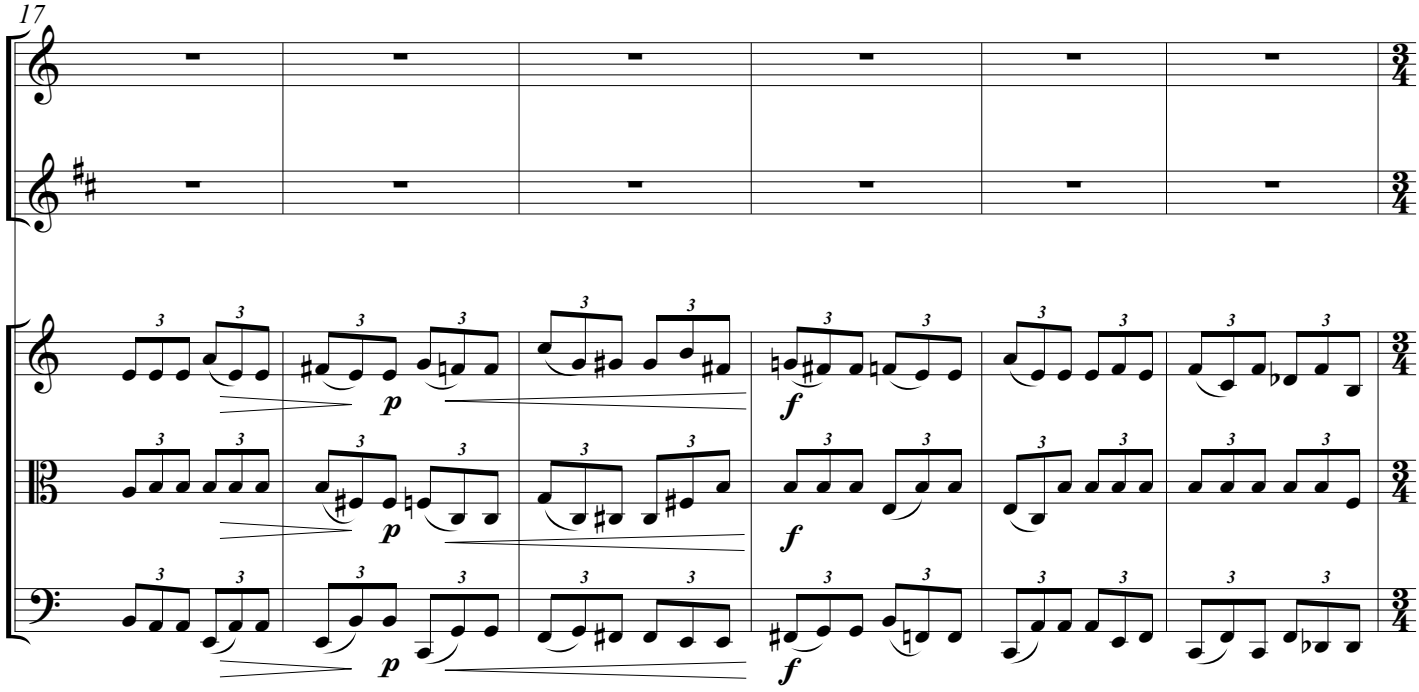

G
63
a tempo
mp
p
arco
arco
68
3
senza vib.
senza vib.
3
3

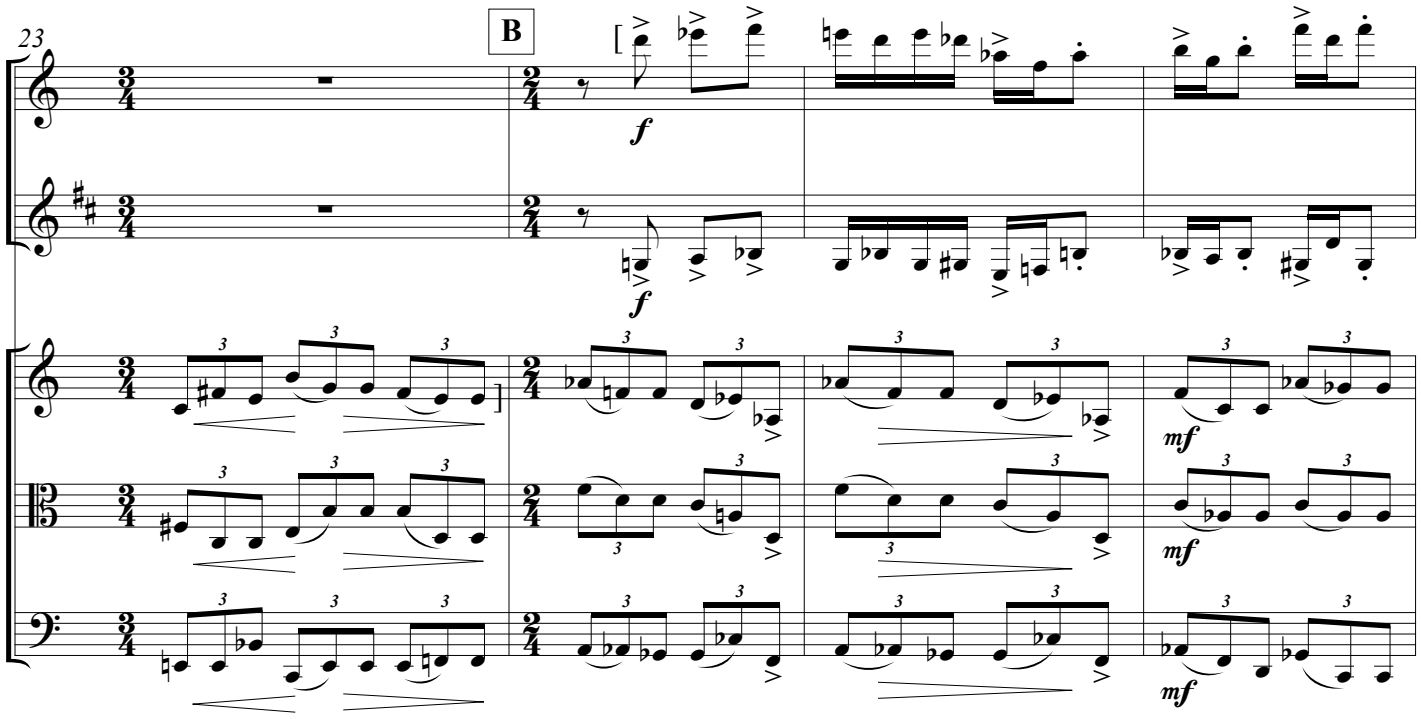
II.

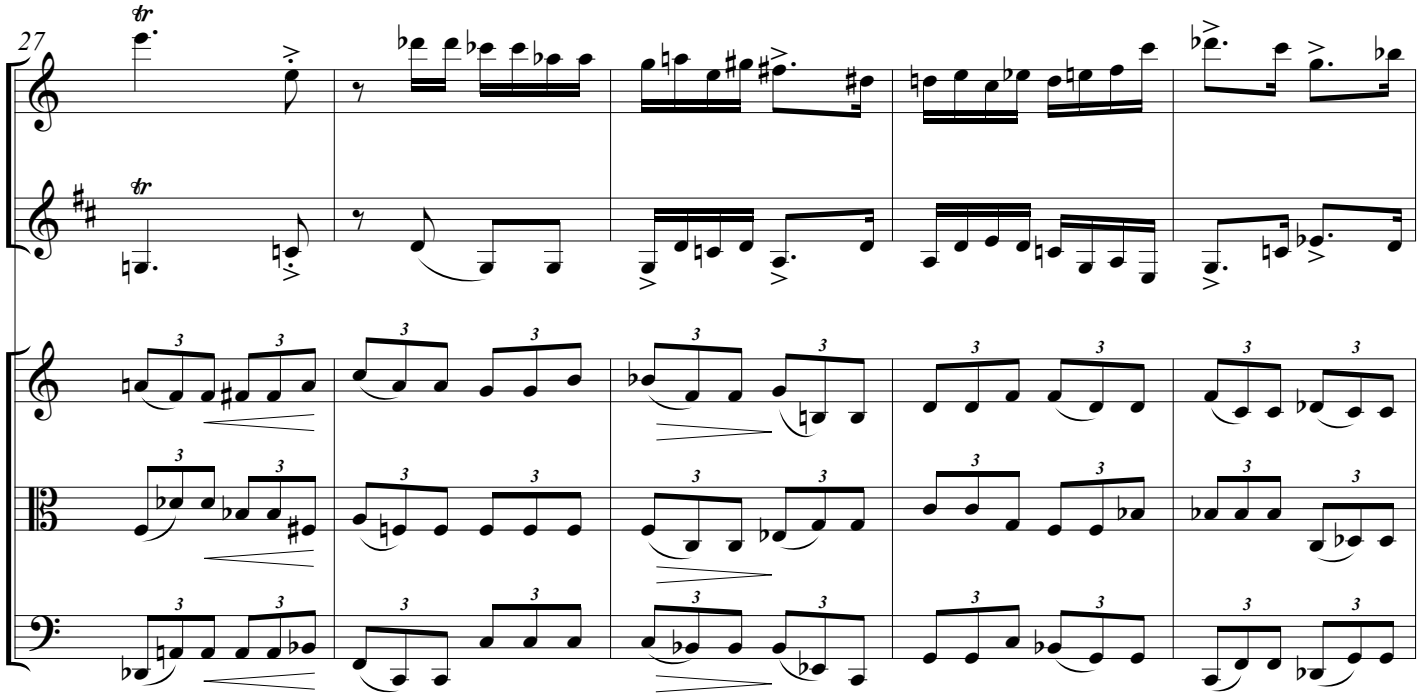

Allegro ♩ = c. 120
running the rapids
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
tr
tr
tr

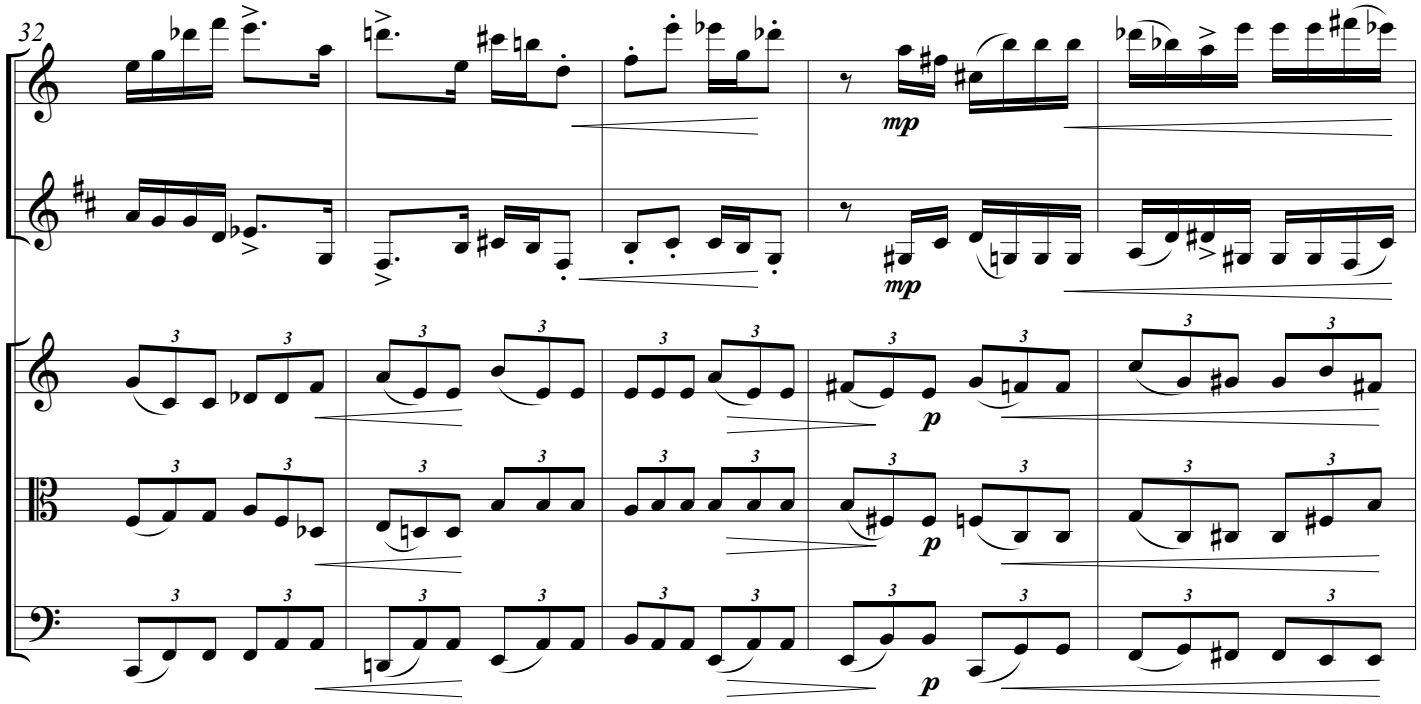

A
5

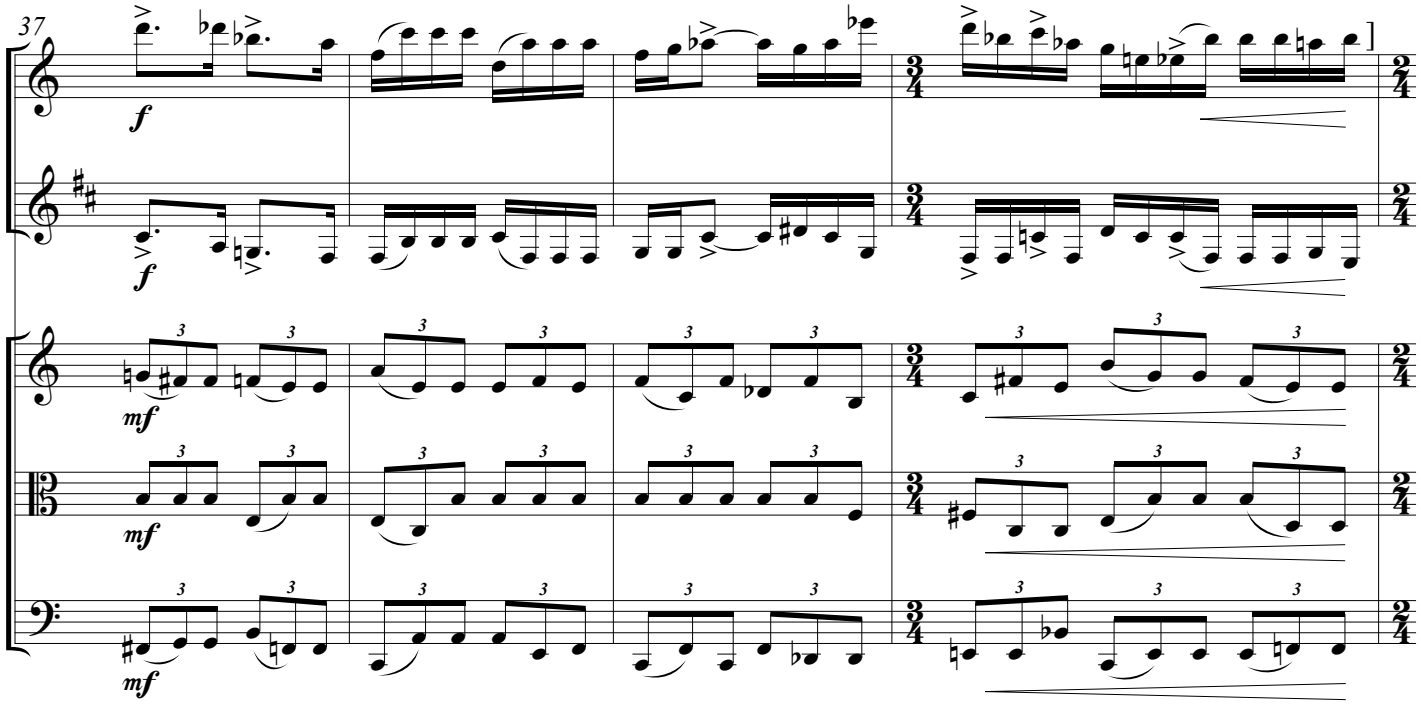

11

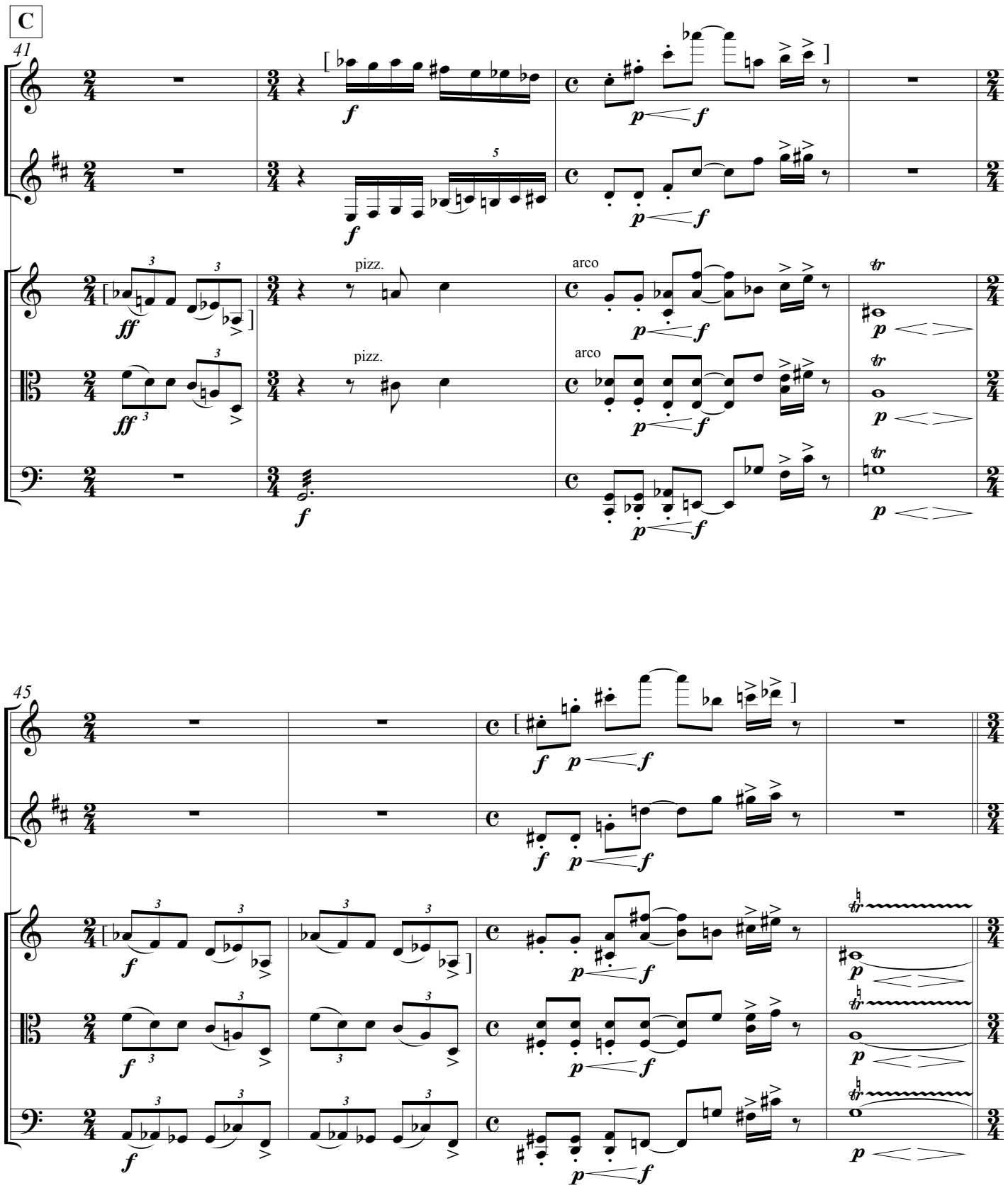

17
p
f

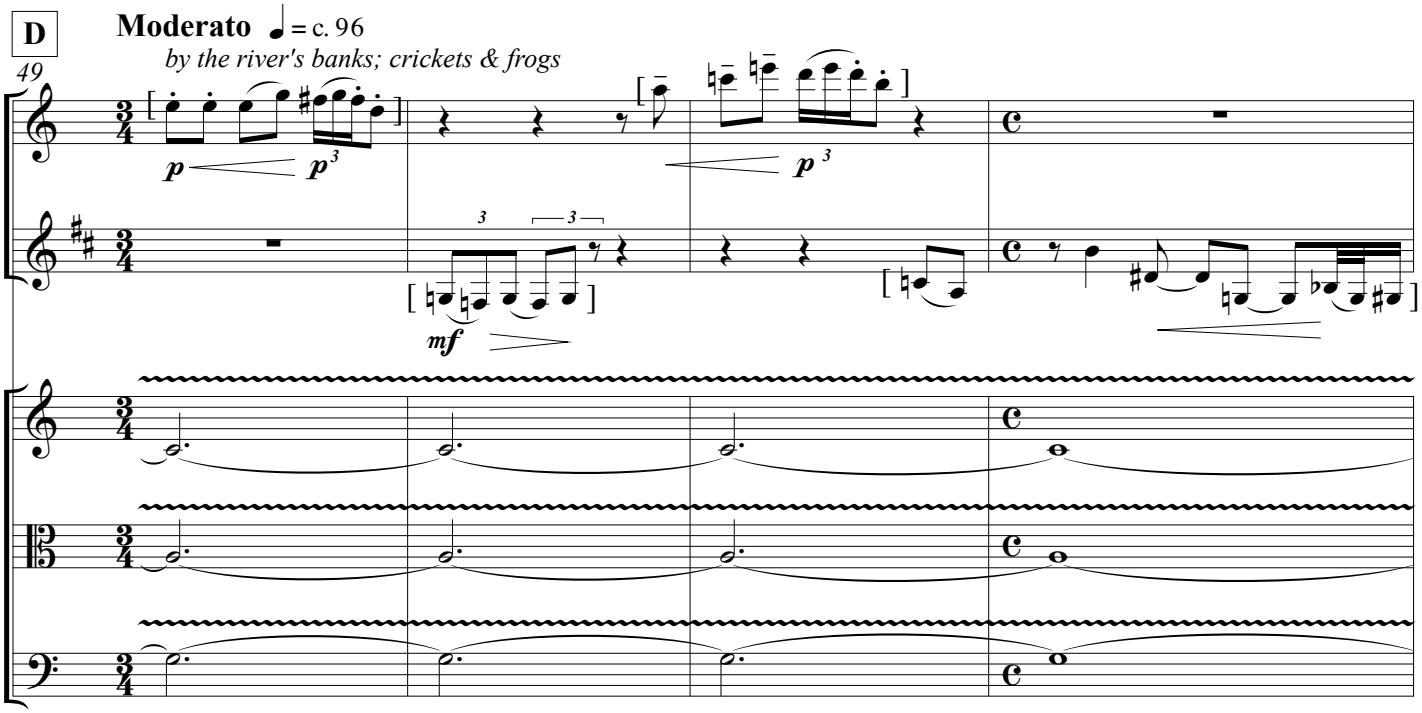

23
B
f
f
mf
mf
mf

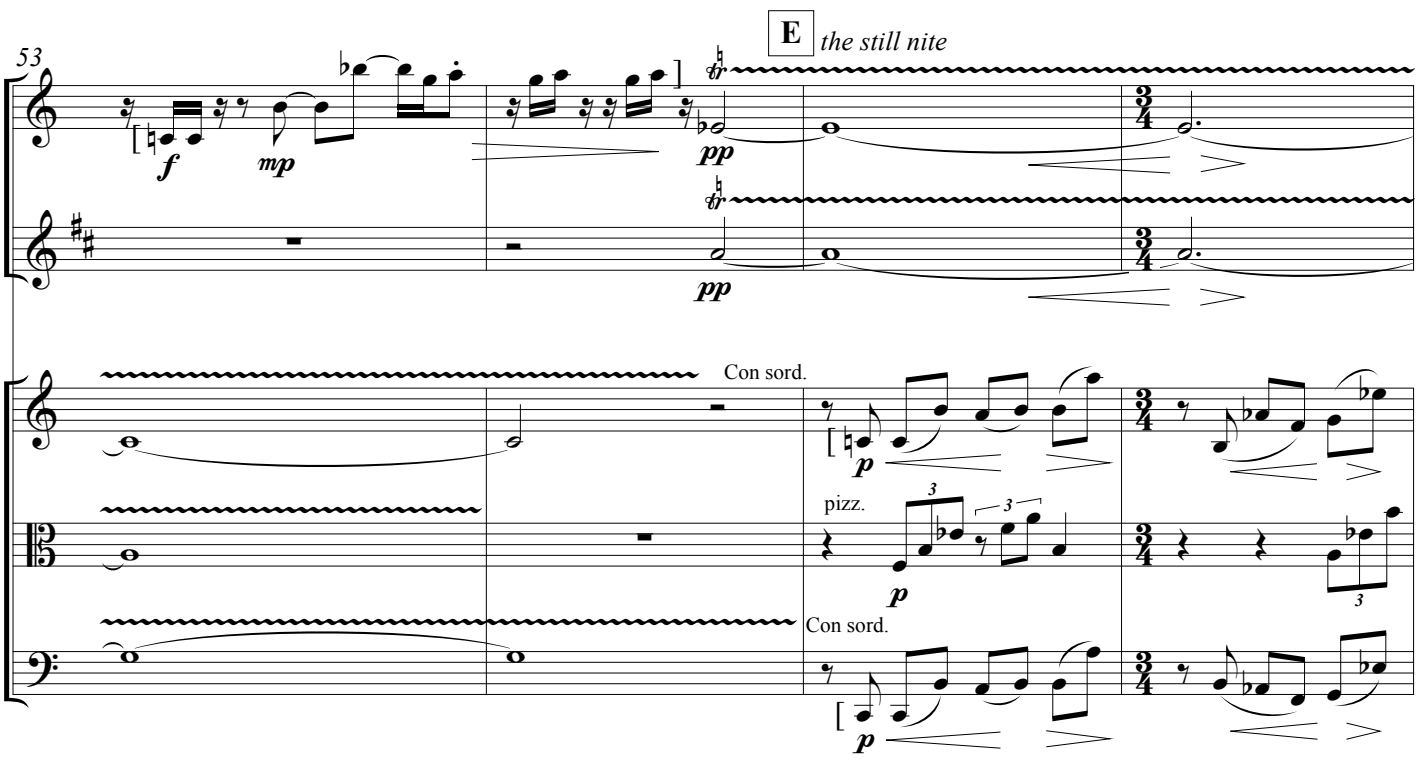

27
tr
tr

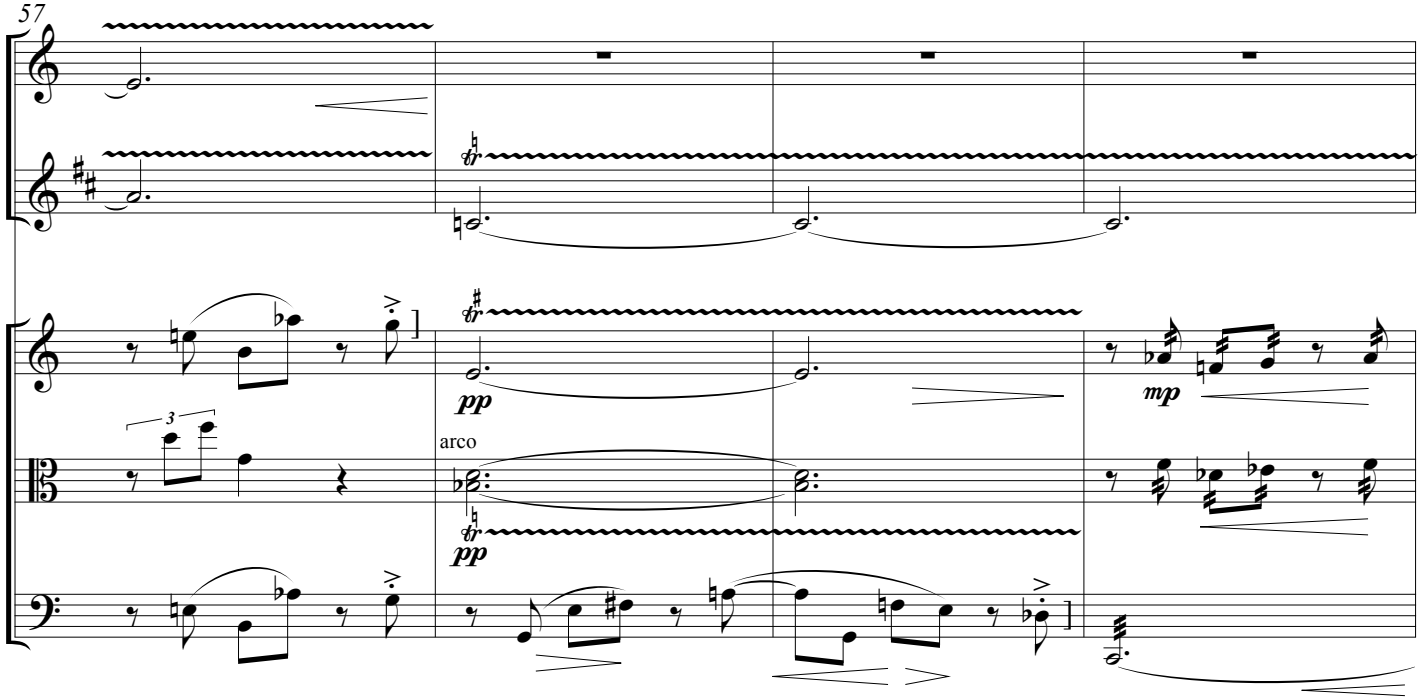

32
mp
mp
p
p
p

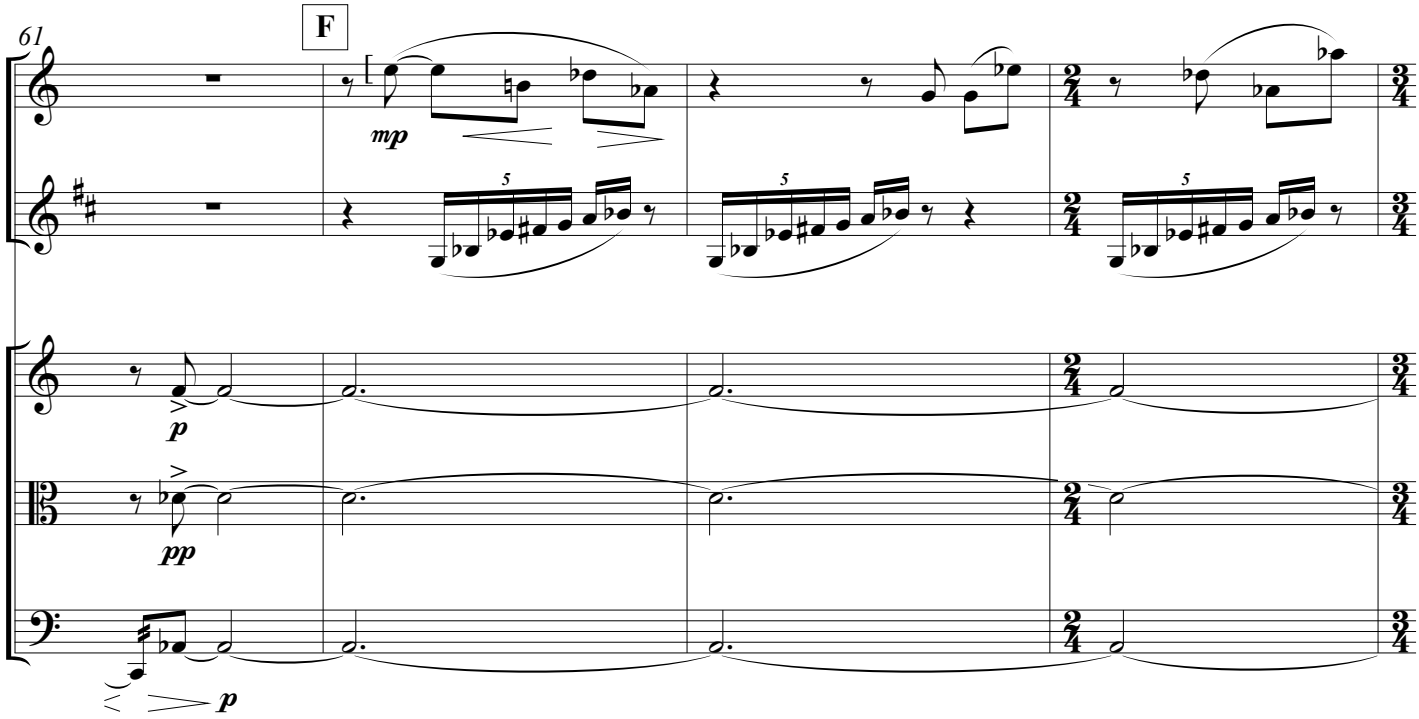

37
f
f
mf
mf
mf

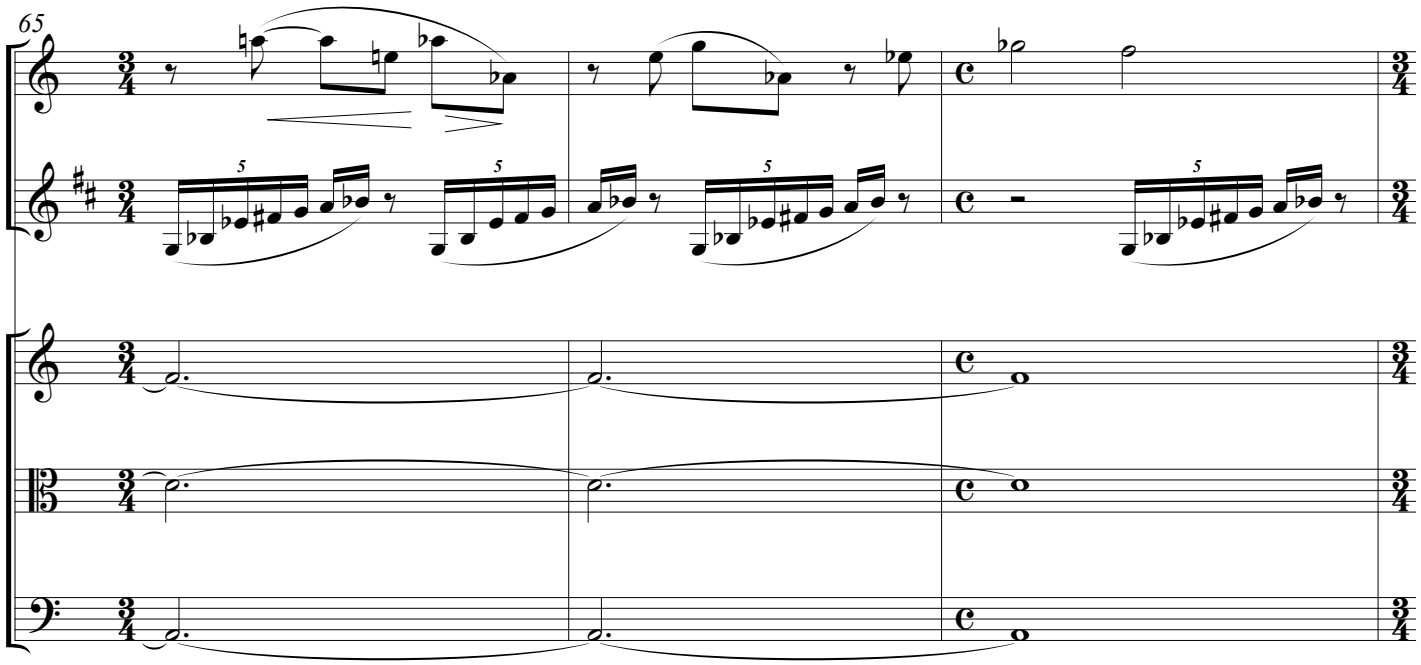

C
41
pizz.
arco
45

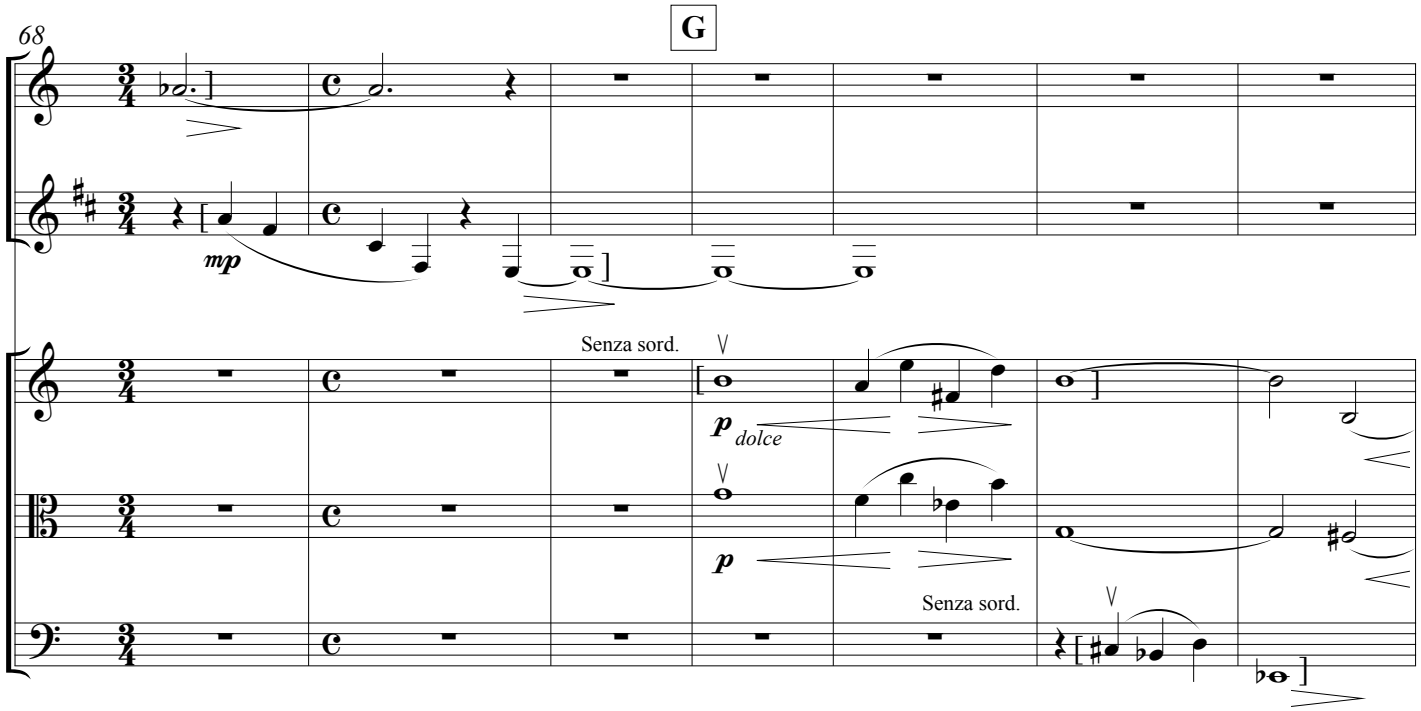

D
Moderato ♩ = c. 96
by the river's banks; crickets & frogs
49
p
p
mf
p

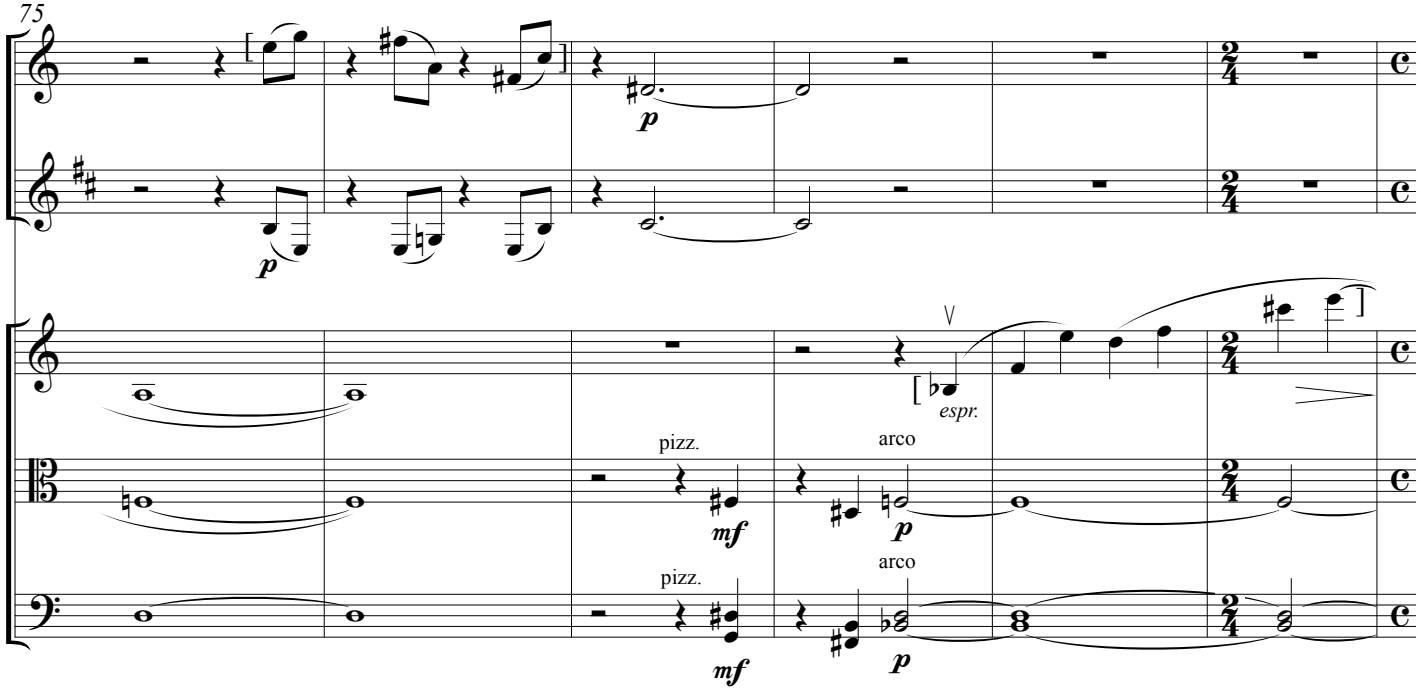

53
E
the still nite
f
mp
pp
pp
Con sord.
p
pizz.
p
Con sord.
p

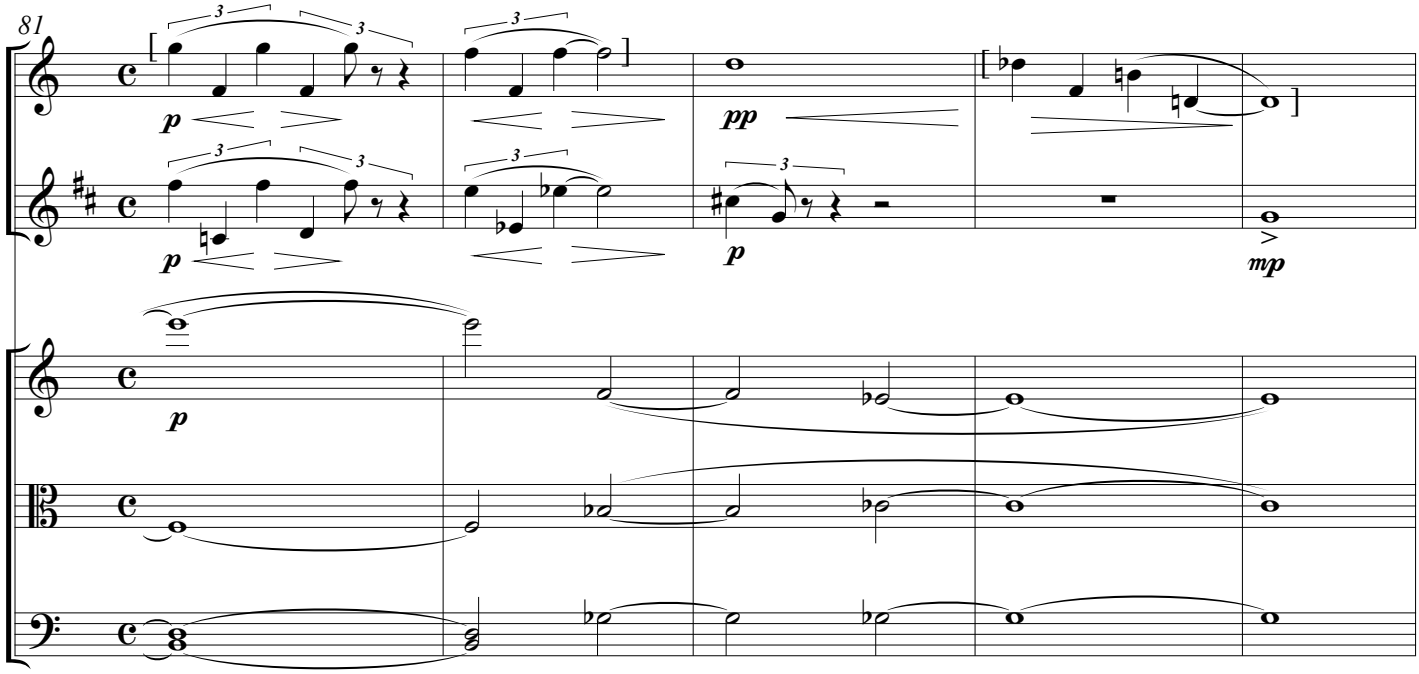

57
arco
pp
mp

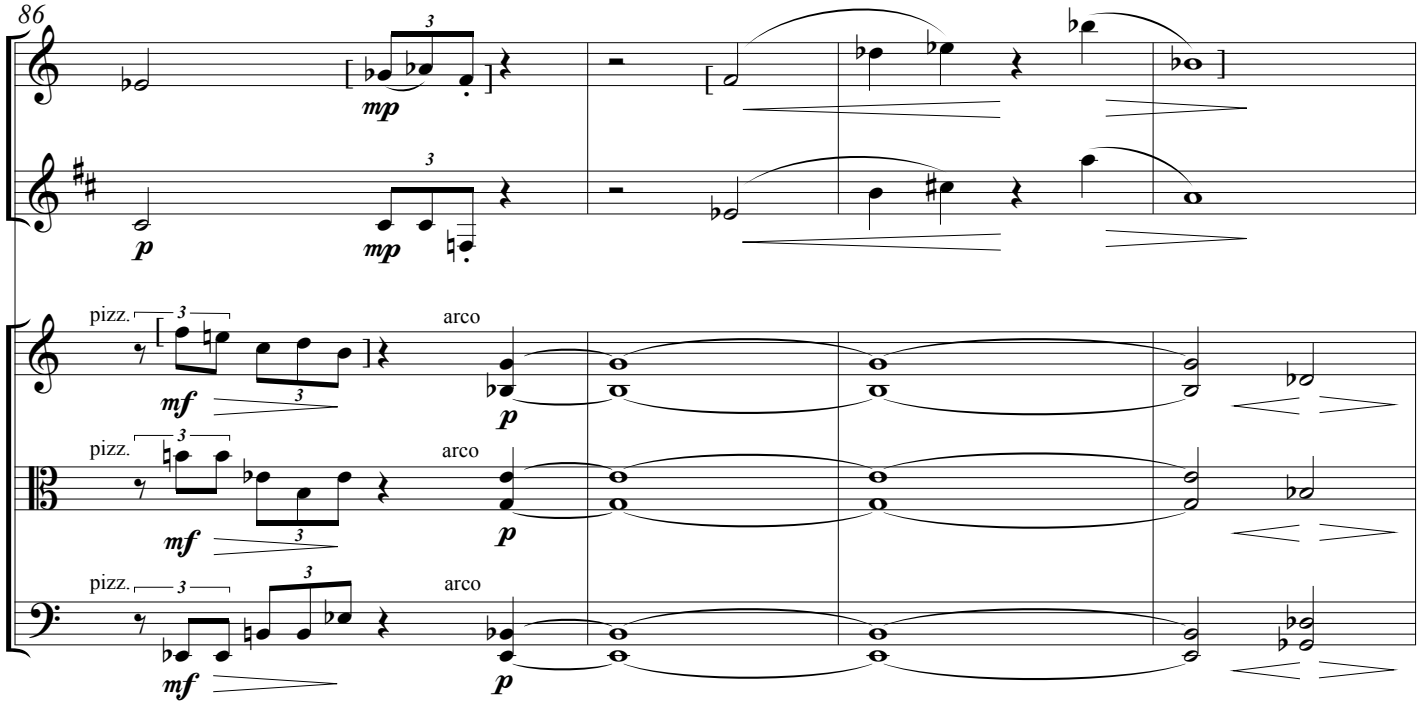

61
F
mp
p
pp
p

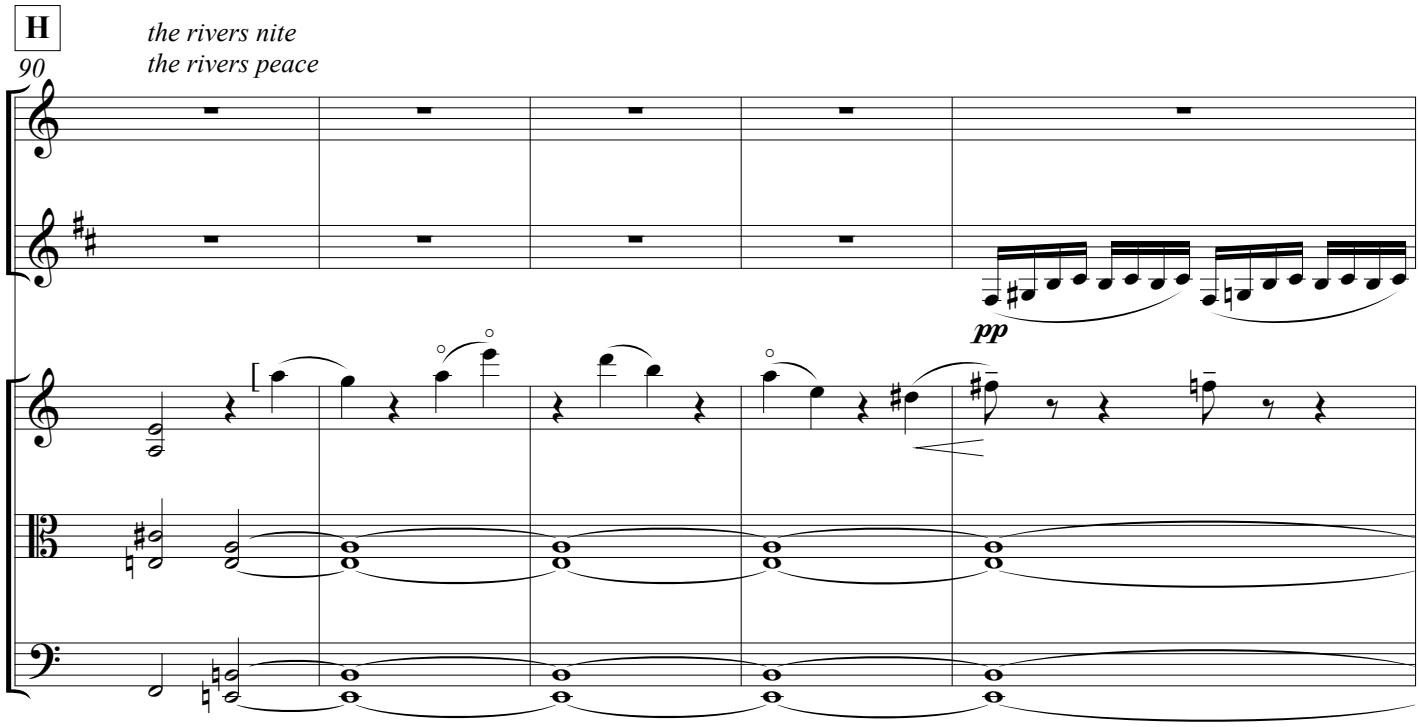

65

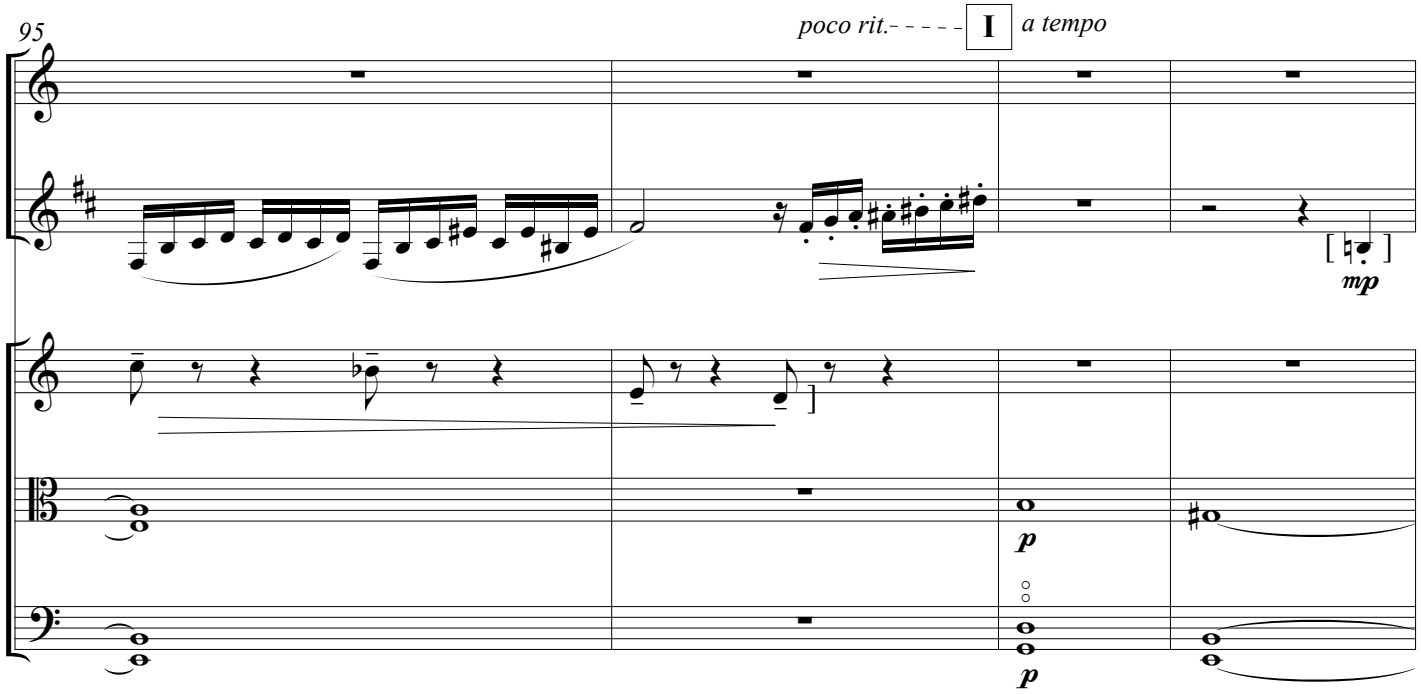

68
G
mp
Senza sord.
p dolce
p
Senza sord.

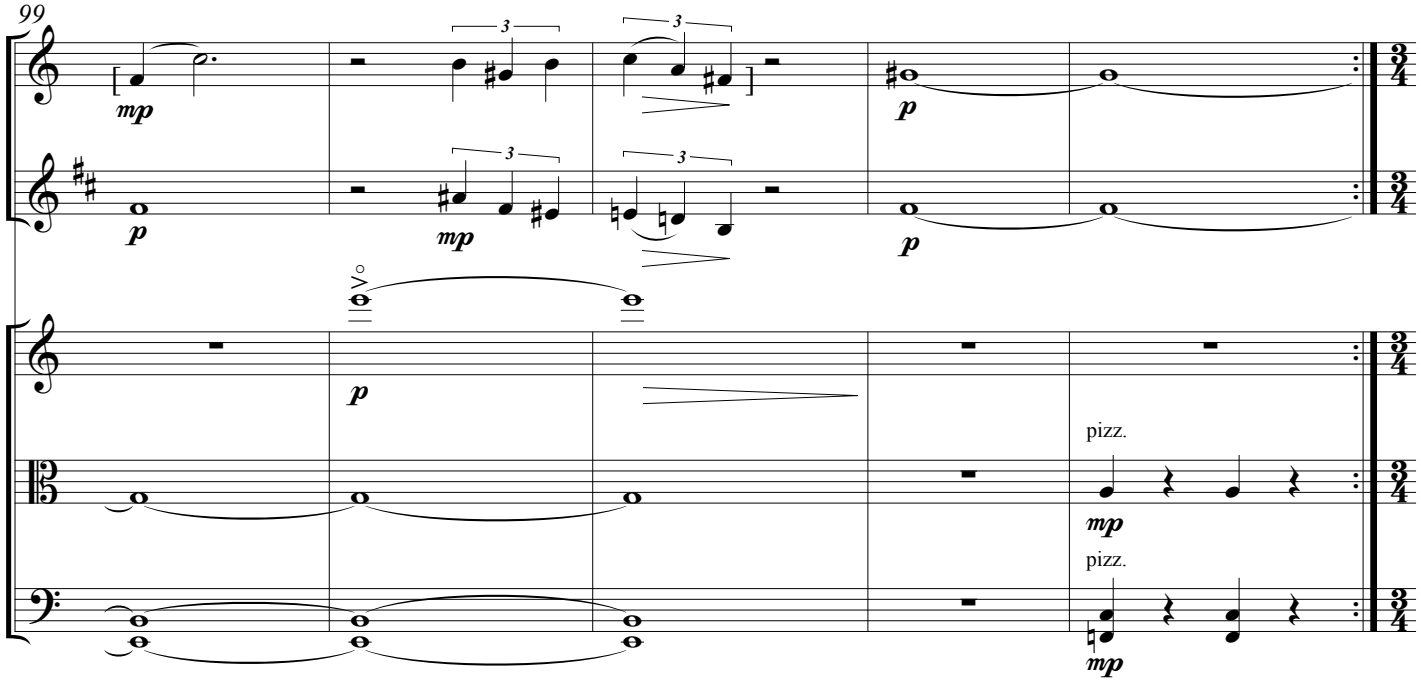

75
p
p
espr.
pizz.
mf
arco
p
pizz.
mf
arco
p

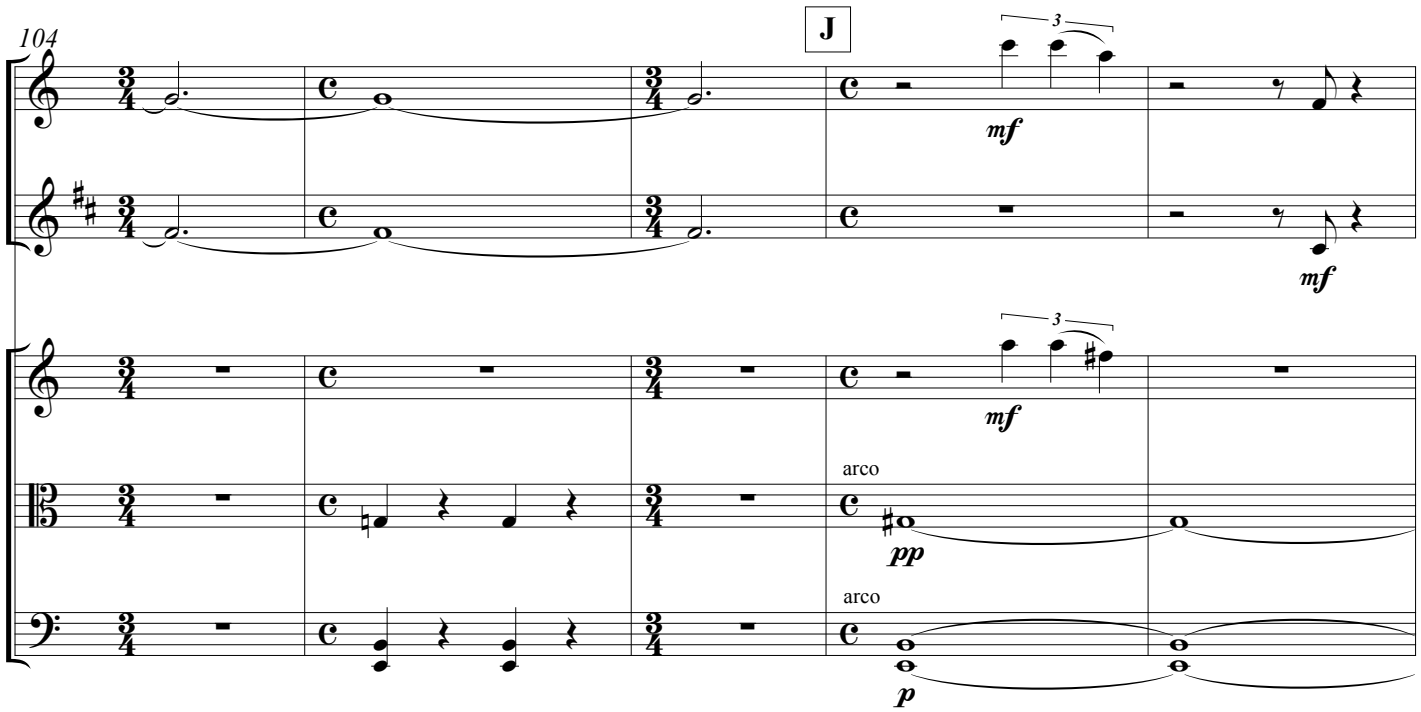

81
p
p
pp
p
mp
p

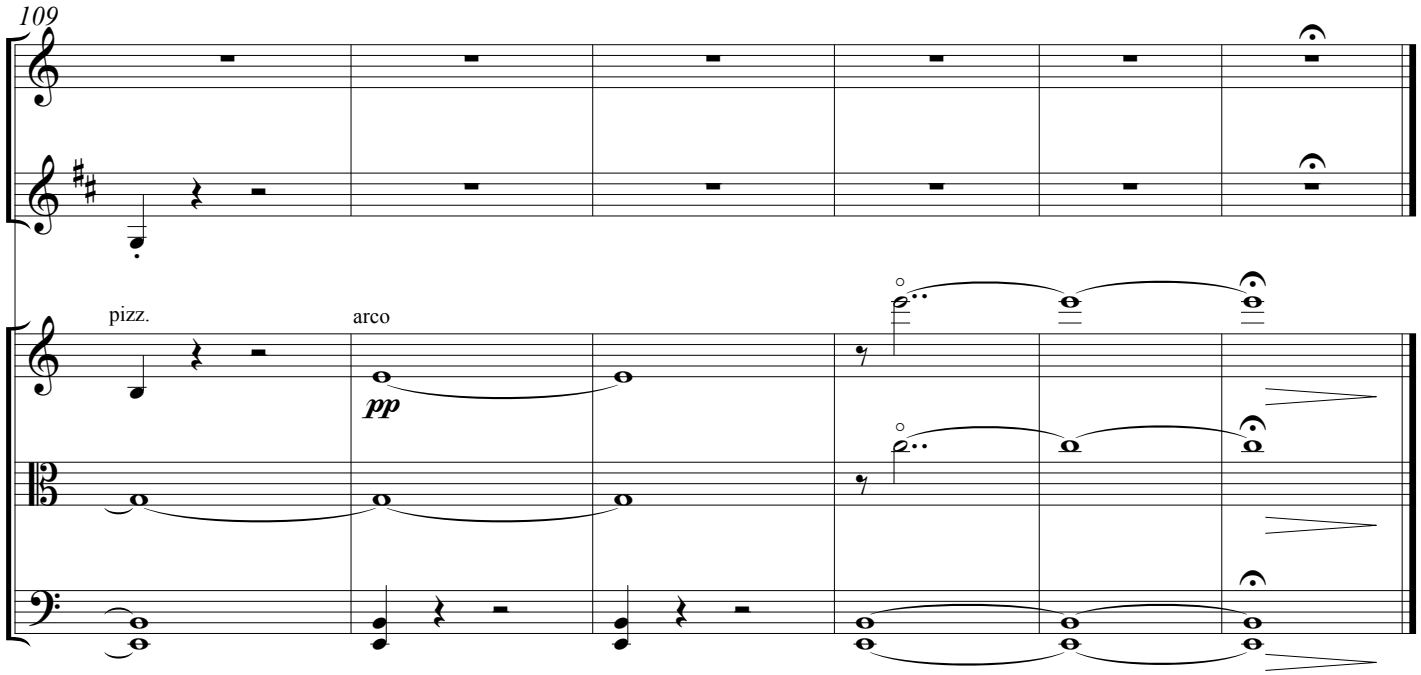

86
mp
p
mp
pizz.
arco
mf
p
pizz.
arco
mf
p
pizz.
arco
mf
p


H
the rivers nite
the rivers peace
90
pp


95
poco rit.- - - - -
I
a tempo
mp
p
p


99
mp
3
3
p
3
3
p
p
p
pizz.
mp
pizz.
mp


104
J
3
mf
mf
3
mf
arco
pp
arco
p


109
pizz.
arco
pp